THE LOVE OF GOD:

A

Diuine Treatiſe containing

Fiue { Degrees / Marks / Aids } of Gods Loue.

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Tranſlated by *Richard Goring*.

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TO THE Honorable, Sir *Richard Molineux*, Knight and Baronet of CEPHTON in the County of *Lancaſter*.

SIr, it may pleaſe you to remember, that during the time I had the honour and happineſſe to attend vpon you at *Oxford*, I had a little Treatiſe in the *French* tongue

giuen me to tranſlate by Maſter Doctor *Hakewill*, who recõmended it for a worke worthy of the Author, who is famous for many other; which when I had endeuoured to performe as well as I could, and that it had paſt the view & cenſure of Doctor *Ratclif*, your worthy Tutor, I greatly deſired to haue dedicated vnto you, as of duty I thought then to haue done: But conſidering your Wor. minoritie at that time, & how much I was bound vnto Maſter Doctor *Hakewill* afore-named, in way of thanke-

thankefulneſſe both for his Copie and encouragement, for that inſtant I made him my Patron thereof.

And therefore now becauſe it hath gotten ſome reputation, and is thought worthy of a fourth Edition, I eſteem it of right to appertaine vnto you, and to haue it paſſe vnder your name, which, I preſume, your Wor. will the more willingly giue way vnto, becauſe it is both in title and ſubſtance the moſt noble ſubiect that can be treated on, and on the other ſide, proceeding

from the great ardor of affection which I haue euer had to ſhew my thankfulneſſe for your Wor. many fauours towards mee, which that you may be pleaſed to continue, I will promiſe you my vttermoſt endeuours to do you ſeruice, and hereafter a greater and more laborious worke in this kinde; and in the meane time my daily prayers for the health and proſperity of your Wor, & all yours.

Your Wor. moſt humble and moſt affectionate to command,

RICH. GORING.

TO
THE HIGH
and mighty Lady,
Anne D'Allegre, wife
vnto the high and mighty
Lord, *Monsieur de Freuaques*,
Marshall of *France*, and the
Kings Lieutenant in
NORMANDY.

Madam,

He Apostle vnto the Hebrewes *teacheth vs, that within the Arke of the Couenant, there*

was a cruse full of Manna, and Aarons rod. God thereby instructing vs, that hee hath not only a care of the nourishing of our soules, but to correct vs for our sinnes also: and that he hath giuen vs together with the bread of his Word, his rod of afflictions. The one nourisheth vs, the other exerciseth vs: the one instructeth vs, the other reformeth vs: the one teacheth vs to doe the will of God, the other maketh vs to renounce our owne: both equally effects of his loue. For God humbleth vs by afflictions, and pricketh the swelling of our pride. He cutteth and loppeth vs, to the end wee may bring forth the more fruit. Hee filleth vs with bitternesse in this life,

to

to the end we might long for the life to come. For thoſe whom God afflicteth grieuouſly in this world, leaue it with leſſe griefe. And indeed if the children of Iſrael, *being come out of* Egypt, *after hauing endured there ſo many afflictions, did notwithſtanding grieue, and oftentimes mutined to returne thither againe: how much more had they grieued, if they had ſuffered nothing? Adde hereunto, that God, who hath formed vs to feare him, knoweth that our prayers are ſlacke and cold in proſperitie, as proceeding from a ſpirit that is cooled by ſucceſſe, and which are endited by cuſtome. The cries which our owne will produceth, are feeble, in com-*

pariſon of thoſe which griefe expreſſeth. There is nothing ſo ſtrong as neceſſitie, nothing ſo ingenious to pray well as ſorrow, which in an inſtant formeth the ſloweſt tongues to a holy eloquence, and furniſheth vs with ſighs which cannot be expreſſed.

It is not then in anger that God afflicteth vs; but becauſe that ſinne is a kinde of falling ſickneſſe, God ſtriketh and afflicteth vs, to awaken vs: his beatings are fatherly corrections: if hee vſed vs otherwiſe, we ſhould not be his children. For if a man ſeeing two children a fighting, doe chaſtiſe one for the ſame, without touching the other, the ſtanders by, without further knowing him, preſume that it is his father:

father: ſo God correcteth as his children thoſe which hee embraceth with a fatherly loue. Hee beginneth his chaſtiſings at his owne houſe. *Now, if Ieſus Chriſt (as ſaith the Apoſtle)* hath learned obedience by the things which he hath ſuffered, although hee were the Sonne: *how much more ought wee to bow downe our necks vnto Gods corrections, and humble our ſelues in his preſence, rather than to kick againſt the prick, or to make the afflictions which are bitter enough of themſelues, to be yet more bitter by impatience?*

None can make a white haire become blacke with all his care: but well may hee make his black haire become white

white through his vnprofitable discontent. It is euer better to follow, than to be dragged on: aboue all, when God conducteth vs: for if the way thorow which he leadeth vs, be thorny, yet is it strait.

Now when I cast mine eye vpon all the remedies of afflictions, I finde there are three things which may assuage griefe; time, reason, and the feare of God. For length of time mitigateth sorrow, and closeth vp the wound, yea euen in the weakest spirits, and most vncapable of consolation: but reason esteemeth this remedy too long, and vnworthy of a courageous man; for wearinesse of weeping is a poore remedy.

The feare of God doth more: for as to appease griefe, reason

reaſon ſtayeth not for time, ſo the feare of God ſtayeth not for reaſon; but before that reaſon can bring in her conſolations, drawne from the ineuitable neceſſitie of euils, or from the vnprofitableneſſe of teares, that reſolueth promptly vpon the loue of God, who chaſtiſeth vs for our good, ſo as in ſtead of caſting forth complaints, it findeth out occaſion of thankeſgiuing, and formeth not only vnto patience, but alſo vnto ioy, as acknowledging amongſt his afflictions certaine ſignes of Gods loue.

Theſe documents, Madam, are ſo much the more familiar vnto you, as you haue had often experience of them, and who being paſt an appren-

apprentiſhip in afflictions, haue carefully ſought out the lenitiues which Gods Word doth furniſh vs withall: which, beſides that ſobrietie and modeſtie which ſhineth in you, and hath altogether eſtranged you from the vanitie which now adayes reigneth in the world, haue taught you to ſolace your ſelfe with God. But take heed alſo, leſt you ſuffer your ſelfe to be ouerwhelmed with ſorrow, and make pietie the nurſe of diſcontent. Inueterate griefes doe often turne into habit, and old wounds become freſh with too much handling; which mee thinks is aboue all, very vnfitting your nature, whoſe meekeneſſe and gentleneſſe, ſo pleaſing vnto all, is much more

at accord with ioy. Shall it be ſaid, that the great viuacitie of ſpirit which God hath giuen you, ſerueth you but to feele griefe more ſenſibly? or that God hath made you great, that your teares might haue the greater fall? Time which eaſeth the moſt ignorant people of their euils, cannot it finiſh the ſighs of a perſon whom God hath ſo much enriched with his knowledge? Shall it not bee better to ioy in future good things, which are great and certaine, than to afflict our ſelues for euils paſt, which are remedileſſe? Herein ſurely God is offended, if in worldly croſſes wee finde more occaſion of griefe, than matter of ioy in heauenly riches. And wrongfully doe

wee

wee complaine of our afflictions; seeing wee hurt ourselues, wee doe vnder hand as it were confesse, that God hath not afflicted vs enough. The Psalmist saith indeed, that God putteth vp our teares into his bottles, *as precious things: but he speaketh of repentance, or of griefe, to see God blasphemed & despised among men. For God gathereth not vp obstinate teares, which extending themselues beyond their limits, occupie the time due to comfort and consolation.*

How many times (giuing your selfe to reading) haue you bedewed the holy Scripture with your teares? and yet this booke containeth the matter of our ioy. And in the

the booke of Pſalmes, the tunes whereof you loue, and yet much more the matter, where you ſee your owne picture, and the anatomie of your inward affections: Haue you not obſerued that all the Pſalmes which haue their beginnings troubled, and whoſe firſt lines contain nothing but profound ſighs and broken complaints, doe end in delight, and termes which doe witneſſe contentment and peace of conſcience? Let your teares, Madam, be formed vpon this example, and let them end in ſpirituall ioy. Let your faith raiſe her ſelfe vnder her burthen, and let the ſluces of afflictions which God hath ſtopped her courſe withall, make her to run forth with

with the greater impetuonſneſſe : let her take ſtrength from reſiſtance. Hereunto the meditation of Gods graces will much ſerue you : which if you counterbalance with your euils, they will mightily weigh them downe.

The onely attention of future glory, which you apprehend by faith, can it not digeſt all bitterneſſe ? That faith which filled the Martyrs with ioy in the middeſt of their preſent torments ; may it not, wee being at our eaſe, comfort vs againſt the memory of paſſed euils? And you who acknowledge what ſeruitude thoſe people liue in, which are dragged into perdition by the inuiſible chains of opinion and cuſtome : can you ſufficiently magnifie the

grace

grace which God hath giuen you, in honouring you with his Alliance, and enlightning you with his Truth? yea, and in your life time, how many of Gods assistances, how many difficulties haply ouer-gone? God hauing giuen you the grace to be alone in your familie an example of constancie and holy perseuerance in the profession of his truth, hauing made you great, that in the contradiction of the world, you might be an example of firmnesse and constancie. And yet admit, your wounds were more grieuous, as taking all at the worst, our liues being so short, they cannot long last: for you are not troubled to seeke consolations against death, seeing that death it selfe

ſelfe is a conſolation vnto vs. For God, if hee receiue the ſighs which wee powre forth in our prayers, much more regardeth he the ſighs which our ſoules doe giue vp vnto him in our deaths. Which being a place of ſhelter, and which putteth our ſoules into ſecuritie, wee ought not onely to looke for his comming, but euen goe forth to meet him: haſtening his comming by our deſires, by the example of S. Paul, *who ſaith, that* his deſire tendeth to diſlodge, and be with Chriſt. *And to ſay with* Dauid, O when ſhall I preſent my ſelfe before Gods face? *For our ſoules being bound vnto our bodies by two bonds, whereof the one is naturall, and the other voluntary:*

voluntary: if through hatred and contempt of life preſent, wee vntie the voluntary bond, waiting the time when God ſhall breake the naturall, death then comming, ſhall finde the buſineſſe begunne, and our ſoules prepared to this ſolution.

Theſe cogitations, Madame, and ſuch like, haue hitherto giuen you conſolation: the which although you be ſufficiently prouided of, and haue alwayes ready many ſpirituall remedies, yet you borrow from other the receits; and haue thought that I could contribute ſomething to your conſolation.

And to this effect hauing heard talke of ſome of my ſermons vpon the loue of God,

God, you would needs make vse of the power you haue ouer mee, demanding them of mee in writing; knowing well, that of the discontentments of this life, there is no such gentle remouall as the loue of God, or more strong remedy, than that he loueth vs.

Here-from I drew backe a long time, partly through idlenesse accompanied with some other distractions; partly through feare apprehending your indgement, which farre surpassing ordinary spirits, feedeth it selfe not vpon vulgar meats.

At length, after long delay, being not any longer able to striue against your instant requests, which are vnto mee as so many commandements.

mandements, I haue let this diſcourſe come forth in publike, vnder the protection of your name, to the end that the imperfections thereof may likewiſe be imputed vnto you, and that you might beare alſo a part of the blame, for hauing aſſiſted at the birth of that which ought not to haue ſeene the light: but I ſhall be eaſily excuſed, as hauing obeyed you. For honour ſhall it euer be vnto mee, to execute your commandements, and to imploy my ſelfe to do you moſt humble ſeruice, as being your

Moſt humble and moſt obedient ſeruant,

Peter du Moulin.

A TABLE

of the Chapters and principal points contained in this Treatise of the Loue of God.

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Chap. I.
Of true and falſe Loue.

Loue is that point of our ſpirits, whereby ſhe ioyneth her ſelfe vnto obiects. That which is weight in heauy things, Loue is the very ſame in our ſoules. For, as weight moueth earthly bodies towards the place of their reſt: ſo loue moueth our ſoules towards that obiect which promiſeth reſt and contentment. Wherupon it fol-

loweth, that as heauy things doe mooue in a direct line towards the place of their reſt; ſo if wee will attaine vnto any perfect repoſe, our loue muſt goe right, and haue an equall motion.

Seuen reaſons to proue that the loue of God is the only true loue.

1 True loue then is that ſame, which giueth reſt and contentment vnto the ſoule; whereas falſe loue is an irregular agitation, and endleſſe motion. Such is worldly loue, which we ſee to bee filled with vnquietneſſe, & not to ſtay his agitation, but through weariſomneſſe or deſ-

paire;

paire; which is no reſt, but an vnableneſſe to mooue, becauſe that force failing, deſire doth ſtill continue; like vnto a tied horſe, which gnaweth his bit. Such are almoſt all men: they haue many deſires and little power; they moſt deſire that they can leaſt doe: neither being able to obey or command their couetouſnes. They cannot obey it, becauſe of their weaknes; nor command it, becauſe of their incontinency. So that if a man enioy, without any let, that

which hee loueth, that verie eaſineſſe it ſelfe bringeth him a diſtaſte withall: for worldly loue is inflamed by reſiſtance, and nouriſhed with difficulties: like vnto thoſe fiſhes which loue to bee in violent ſtreames and floudgates, but doe die in a ſtill water.

The cauſe of this vnquietneſſe, is, becauſe that our loue chuſeth falſe obiects, and which cãnot ſatisfie couetouſneſſe. For if you paſſe your eye vpon al, which is beſt and moſt pleaſing in the world, you ſhall

ſhall not find therein any firme and ſtable quiet, but a chaine of cares linked together, a web of perpetuall vnreſt. The moſt graue ſweets are ſowced in bitterneſſe: the atchieuement of riches, pleaſure and honour, is painefull, and many periſh in the purſuite thereof: the poſſeſſion is vncertaine, but the loſſe certaine. For if theſe things leaue not vs by ſome accident, we ſhall leaue them by death. Theſe are things which are beſtowed not onely vpon the wicked, but

euen becauſe they are bad, as being rewards of wickedneſſe. To expoſe a mans loue towards theſe things, is but a purſuing of the winde, and a perpetuall trauell. For euen when theſe things might bee termed alwaies good, yet are they vncertaine. A man cannot take good aime at a flying Fowle, nor haue any aſſured deſignement, aiming after tranſitory goods and pleaſures. Wee muſt ſeeke our reſt then, ſome other where than on earth, and turne the edge of our

our loue towards heauen. For euen as the lower part of the elementary region, is the ſeat of winds, tempeſts and earthquakes, but that part towards heauen is alwaies peaceable and ſtill: ſo our loue ſhall be euer full of vnquietneſſe, whilſt it ſettles it ſelfe vpon baſe things; but it ſhall find reſt, if it raiſe it ſelfe towards heauen, & Gods promiſes. And for this cauſe is it, that in the midſt of tempeſtuous weather at ſea, the needle of the compaſſe remaineth alwaies vnmoueable,

mouable, & ſtayed vpon one point, namely, becauſe it gouerns it ſelfe by the Pole. In like ſort the ſoule of a faithfull Chriſtian, in the midſt of the confuſions of this world, and moſt grieuous affl ctions, ſhall enioy a moſt aſſured peace, becauſe his loue aimeth at heauen, and ſtayeth it ſelfe vpon Gods promiſes, which is the true obiect of our loue, which alone is to be chiefly loued; which can make vs louely in louing vs, and which alone can, yea, will make them happy

happy who loue them. As the Apostle S. Paul saith: *The eie of man hath not seene, his eares heard, nor hath euer entred into his heart, what things God hath prepared for those which loue him.* 1. Cor. 2. 9. Also, hee promiseth in S. Iohn, *To come vnto him which loueth him, and to dwell with him.* Ioh. 14. 23. Admirable loue, which maketh our soules to bee the Palace of the King of heauen, and the Sanctuary of his Spirit.

2 Philosophy leadeth vs hereunto at vnawares: for it hath for a ge-

generall Maxime, that God and Nature make nothing in vaine. Now this infinite desire, this vnsatiable appetite which is in man, should be in vain, if there were not somthing to contẽt it: which being not found vpon earth, must bee sought for in heauen, and towards God, who is infinite goodnesse.

3 Adde hereunto, that God hauing created the world for mans vse, hath without all doubt created man for some better thing than the world, to wit, for God

God himſelfe.

4 And that amongſt all creatures, God hath created man alone vnto his Image, alone with vpright ſtature & viſage erected vpwards, to the end he might loue him whoſe reſemblance hee beareth, & that his deſire and his loue might aim at heauenly things.

5 Adde we hereunto, that the perfection of our ſpirits cannot bee but in the vnion with the Chiefe of ſpirits, which communicateth his vertuevnto the creature, in like faſhion as the Sunne darts out his beames

beames and light, that is, giueth it in such sort, that it yet dependeth vpon him after hauing giuen it.

6 Moreouer, true loue is that which transformeth the louer into the thing beloued. Now, if a deformed man loue a corporall beauty, neuer shall he by that loue correct his owne imperfection: contrariwise, by louing God, wee become like to him, and as the Apostle saith in the 2. Corinth. chap. 3. *Beholding as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord with open*

open face, we are changed into the same image.

7 Finally, beauty being the first sparke of loue, we shall see hereby how that which wee call loue, is not so, but onely a superficial color which couereth filth; but that light is true beauty indeede. God then being the first light, is also the *chiefe beauty*, and by consequent, hee that wee ought chiefly to loue.

Yet humane Philosophy disagreeth here in one point from diuine, which is the Word of God. For natu-

naturall Philoſophy holdeth, that naturall motion is alwaies better than that which is againſt nature. On the contrary, in matter of loue, the Scripture teacheth vs, that the loue contrary vnto our nature, is better than the naturall: for ſithence ſatan by ſeducing *Adam*, hath disfigured the Image of God in man, mans deſires haue turned towards the world, and in a manner our loue hath beene falne headlong downe from heauen to earth. The affections of the fleſh

are

are enmity with God, *Rom.* 8. If any one loue God, it is not of his owne nature, but it is a gift of God. Wherefore our Lord Ieſus in the eight of Saint *Iohn*, ſaith, that *none can come to him, if his Father draw him not.* And the Apoſtle *Paul* pulling vs out of the myre and thicke mudde, commandeth vs to *ſeeke the things which are on high*, Colloſſians ver. 1, 2. For the ſaying of the Apoſtle S. *Iohn* is moſt true, that *wee muſt loue God, becauſe he hath loued*

vs

vs first. This is also one of the effects of the loue of God towards vs, to wit, *our loue towards him.* And there is nothing that we ought to demand of God with more feruency, than to haue the grace to loue him: for this is vnto the faithfull a witnesse that God loueth him: it is the first effect of faith: it is a most expresse trace of Gods Image: it is the most liuely marke of Gods children. This loue is the soule of other vertues, the rule of our actions, the summary of the Law.

Law. This loue is the vpholder of Martyrs, the Ladder of heauen, the peace of conſcience: yea, I dare ſay, it is a taſte & a beginning of the vnion and communication which we ſhall haue with God in Heauen. Our meditation cannot chuſe a more excellent ſubiect : for what is there which is greater than God, or more ſweet than his loue ? The profit likewiſe is no leſſe than the ſweetneſſe : for men are good or bad, not becauſe they beleeue, but becauſe they loue.

Thoſe

Thoſe bee good which loue good things; and amongſt good things, what is there like vnto God? who not onely is ſoueraignely good, but who alſo maketh them good which loue him. Let vs then endeuour ſo to doe, and to be Diſciples vnto the holy Spirit, which is loue it ſelfe, and which will forme our hearts vnto loue; leſt wee bee deceiued vnder this name of loue, & leſt we ſhould take for this true loue, a corporall loue, an importunate itching, a furious

ous heat, to wit, the worſt of vices, for the chiefe of vertues; a brutall ſickneſſe, for an Angelicall perfection.

I know truly, that he who ſhall diſpoſe himſelfe to loue God with all his heart, & to neglect all other conſiderations in regard of his ſeruice, ſhall neceſſarily incurre the hatred of the world, *whoſe loue is enmity with God*, as the Apoſtle Saint *Iames* ſaith. But God cauſeth this hatred of the world to profit vs: for, as the Apoſt. ſaith, *All things together, one with*

Iam. 4 4.

Rom. 8.

with another, turne to the good of those which loue God. Euils become blessings vnto them, corporall afflictions are so many spirituall exercises vnto them, the sicknesses of the body are medicines vnto their soules: for in the hands of this soueraigne Physitian, very poison it selfe becommeth a medicine; his strokes are balme, as *Dauid* saith: *and in suffering for Gods cause, there is not onely matter of patience, but euen occasion of glory.* They are like scarres on the forehead, honorable

rable maimes, conformities vnto Ieſus Chriſt, liueries of a Chriſtian Souldier: and all through the vnderpropping of this loue, whoſe ſweetneſſe tempereth this bitterneſſe, and maketh vs reioyce for his names ſake.

Some one will ſay, that the loue of God is an excellent vertue indeed: but that to loue him, wee muſt know him before, and that we cannot know him in this life, but with a ſlender and obſcure knowledge. This is true: but for all

this, wee muſt not let to ſtudy the ſame, we muſt not ſuffer ignorance to bee cauſe of negligence: for we cannot haue ſo little knowledge of God, but it will profit vs, and ſtirre vs vp vnto the loue of God. One beame of his light is worth the whole Sunne. A man were better to haue an obſcure knowledge of God, than a cleare vnderſtanding of naturall things. If a beame of the Sunne doe enter into an obſcure den or dungeon, the priſoner by this little ſnip knoweth

eth the beauty of light: ſo the little which wee haue of the knowledge of God, is ſufficient to giue vs a taſte of his excellency, and to inflame vs with his loue. Moreouer, the knowledge which God giues vs of himſelfe, is not ſo ſmall but it is ſufficient vnto ſaluation: and the obligations which we owe vnto the goodneſſe of GOD (the cauſes of our loue) are fully repreſented vnto vs in his Word; where the Apoſtle Saint *Paul*, Herald of the ſaid Word, ſaith, *That vn-*

to vs is declared all the counsell of God, Acts 20. 27.

Chap. II.

Fiue degrees of the Loue of God.

WE are so vncapable of the loue of God, that we are euen ignorant what it is. This herbe groweth not in our garden; it is a gift from aboue, comming from the Father of lights, who is Loue and Charity it selfe, as saith Saint *Iohn*. It is a liquor which God powreth into

into our ſouls by drops as into narrow mouched veſſels. Wherfore to deale with our ſelues according to our owne ſlowneſſe, wee will endeuour to receiue it into our mindes by little and little, and by eaſie ſteps to bring our ſelues to the higheſt degree of loue.

There are fiue degrees of this loue; the loweſt whereof being the moſt imperfect, doth ſerue notwithſtanding to raiſe vs to the higheſt.

1 The firſt degree is, to loue God, becauſe

of the good which he doth vs, and which wee hope to receiue of him.

2 The ſecond degree is, to loue him for his owne ſake, becauſe he is ſoueraignely excellent, and moſt excellently amiable.

3 The third is, not onely to loue God aboue al things, and more than our ſelues, but alſo not to loue any thing in the world, but for Gods loue.

4 The fourth is, to hate our ſelues for Gods ſake.

5 Aboue all which degrees,

degrees, that loue of God excelleth, wherewith wee ſhall loue him in the life to come. A loue which burneth in the breſts of Saints and Angels, which ſtand before his throne of glory.

Wee call theſe ſorts of loue, degrees, and not kinds; becauſe the higher degrees, containe the inferiour: euen as the moſt excellent white differeth from other whiteneſſe leſſe cleere, not in kind of colour, but in degree: ſteps vpon which wee muſt get vp, and

vpon each of them ſtay a little our ſpirits.

The firſt degree.

To loue God for his bleſſings.

THe firſt and loweſt ſtep is, to loue God becauſe of the good which he doth vs. Vpon this degree of loue was *Dauid*, when in the 116. Pſalme hee ſaith, *I loue the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voyce*; and ſo in the 18. Pſalm. *For God will bee loued for doing good vnto vs. It is God which hath made vs, which keepeth and guideth vs, which nouriſheth our bodies,*

dies, and instructeth our soules; redeemeth vs by his Sonne, gouerneth vs by his holy Spirit, teacheth vs by his Word; maketh vs his seruants, yea his friends, yea his children, yea euen one with himselfe. *Plato* Philosophising vpon the grace of God, according as hee was able, gaue thanks vnto him for three things. 1. For that hee had created him a man, and not a beast. 2. That he was borne a Grecian, and not a Barbarian. 3. That not onely so, but a Philosopher also. We that

Iohn 15. 15
Iob. 17. 17.

are inſtructed in a better ſchoole, doe otherwiſe diſtribute our thankſgiuing, and doe praiſe him for 3. things alſo. 1. That amongſt all his creatures, hee hath made vs men, created after his owne Image. 2. That from among all ſorts of men he hath made vs Chriſtians. 3. That amongſt thoſe which beare the name of Chriſtians, hee hath made vs faithfull ones: Hereto you may adde, if you will, the 4. that he hath adopted & elected vs in his Sonne before the foundation of

of the world : hauing had care of vs not only before we were borne, but euen before the world was made. For if a woman lately conceiuing, loue her future fruit, much more doth she so, when it is borne and embraced in her armes : so if God loued vs before wee had any being, how much more when wee call vpon him and loue him with a filiall loue ? Now in this grace, the lesse our number is, the greater is our priuiledge, the greater his bounty and mercy to

towards vs, to be like a few well ſighted among a throng of blind men; like the portion of *Iacob* in Egypt, alone enlightned in the midſt of that darkneſſe which couered all the countrey: like *Gedeons* fleece, alonely watered with his bleſſing, whileſt all the reſt of the earth is dry, and deſtitute of his grace. God hath enuironed vs with examples of blindneſſe, to the end wee might make the more account of light. and that we ſhould goe on in the way of righteouſneſſe

ouſneſſe whileſt the day laſteth, whileſt hee enlighteneth vs by his Word.

All theſe graces depend vpon one ſpeciall grace: which is our reconciliation with God by the death of Ieſus Chriſt; it is hee that is the conduitpipe thorow which the graces of God doe flow vnto vs: it is *Iacobs* ladder, which ioyneth earth vnto heauen, which ioyneth man againe with God. The Angels aſcending this ladder, doe ſignifie our praiers. The Angels deſcending, ſignifie Gods bleſ-

bleſſings. *Iacobs* ſleeping at the foot of this ladder, repreſenteth the reſt of our conſciences vnder the ſhadow of his interceſſion. For before, on what ſide ſoeuer man could turne his eies, he could ſee nothing but matter of feare and aſtoniſhment. If hee looked on God, hee ſaw a conſuming fire, and a ſoueraigne Iuſtice armed againſt ſinners: If hee looked on the Law, hee ſaw the ſentence of his condemnation: if on the heauen, he ſaid, I am ſhut out thereof by my ſins: if

if on the world, he ſaw himſelfe falne from the empire he before had ouer the creatures: if on himſelfe, he ſaw a thouſand corporall and ſpirituall infirmities. By the ſignes in heauen, and earthquakes, he was ſeized with trembling and feare: then Satan, death, and hell were the enemies which either drew him to perdition, or tortured him with their apprehenſion. But now each man which hath an aſſured truſt in Ieſus Chriſt, looketh on all theſe things with another

ther eye, and ſingeth another ſong. If he looke vpon God, hee will ſay, It is my Father, who hath adopted me in his Sonne. If he thinke on the Iudgement ſeat of the laſt day, he will ſay, My elder brother ſitteth thereon, and he who is my Iudge, is alſo my aduocate. If hee thinke on the Angels, hee will ſay, Theſe are my keepers, *Pſal.* 34. If hee looke on heauen, he will ſay, It is my houſe. If he heare it thunder from aboue, he will ſay, It is my Fathers voice. If he conſider the law,

law, hee ſaith, The Son of God hath fulfilled it for me. If he be in proſperity on earth, he will ſay, God hath yet better things for mee in ſtore. If he be in aduerſity, hee will ſay, Ieſus Chriſt hath ſuffered much more hereof for my ſake; God exerciſeth me, proueth me, or correcteth me, or rather honoureth mee, making me like vnto his Son. If he thinke on the Deuill, death, or hell, then hee will triumph ouer all, ſaying with the Apoſtle, 1. *Cor.* 15. *O death, where is thy ſting? O*

O graue, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who hath giuen vs victory through Iesus Christ our Lord. If these things buzze and keepe a noise like angry waspes, yet haue they lost their sting. If the old Serpent pricke our heele, yet is his head bruised. If the Deuill through persecutions giue vs a false alarme, yet belong wee to Iesus Christ, who hath bought vs, and none shall snatch vs out of his hand. Who will feare, hauing such a Patron, who not onely maketh intercession

ſion for ſinners, but of ſinners maketh them iuſt? who not only pleadeth for a bad cauſe, but alſo of bad, maketh it good, becauſe that he doth not only pray, but alſo pay for vs: ſo that to pardon vs, is not only a worke of his mercy, but alſo an effect of his iuſtice.

Theſe obligations vnto the loue of God are common vnto all the faithfull. But I thinke, if each one would looke backe into the courſe of his life, and call to minde the time paſſed, there is none

none of vs but ſhould finde iuſt cauſe to acknowledge beſides theſe common benefits, many particular witneſſes of the care and loue of God towards vs: of deliuerances out of many dangers, vnhoped for good chances, commodious afflictions, our purpoſes croſſed, but for our good, extraordinary meanes to bring vs vnto the knowledge of his Truth. Shall it be ſaid, that the bleſſings of God haue rained vpon the ſands, without making vs more fruitfull of good workes?

workes? Shall wee be like vnto beasts, which drinke of the brooke, without thinking of the spring; without raising vp our thoughts vnto GOD the welspring of all blessings?

Meane while, when we say that God doth vs good, to the end we should loue him; it is not, because he hath any neede of our loue, but because he would saue vs, hee would that wee should loue him; because it is impossible to bee saued whilest wee hate him. Moreouer, our louing

uing him alſo, is partly his gift; for it is hee which kindleth his loue in vs. God doth not only giue vs his graces, but giues alſo grace to demand them, the hand to apprehend them, and grace to make good vſe thereof; the vertue to glorifie him for the ſame, in ſuch ſort, as to acknowledge that we owe vnto him not onely thoſe his good things, but euen our ſelues alſo. God doth good vnto the vnworthy; but he maketh them worthy by this doing them good: his ſpirituall gra-

graces being of ſuch nature, as that they transforme ſuch as receiue them.

This firſt degree of loue being holy and neceſſary, is not for all that any more then a beginning of the loue of God, and as the firſt ſtroke of true pietie. For he who loueth God but for his profit, is like vnto little children, who ſay their prayers that they may breake their faſts: and to ſpeake properly, they loue not God but themſelues. Such a loue, if it extend it ſelfe no further,

ther, is a mercenary loue, yea and iniurious vnto God. For it may bee alwayes thought that the end is better than those things which tend thereunto. If then the loue of God haue no other end but our owne profit, wee place the same aboue God, and make our interest more excellent than his seruice. Let him then which is come to this first degree of loue, if he passe on no further, know, that God pardoneth vs much, if hee punish not that which is grounded but vpon

vpon the loue of our ſelues : wherefore wee muſt mount higher, and come to the ſecond ſtep.

The ſecond degree of Gods loue.

THe ſecond ſtep of Gods loue, is to loue him, not onely for our profits ſake, but euen for his owne ſake : to wit, that laying aſide all conſideration of his benefits, yea and our hope of any profit from him, yet to loue him aboue all things. *Dauid* ſpeaketh of this loue in the

To loue God for Gods owne ſake.

the 69. *Pſalme*, verſ. 37. *Let all them which loue thy name, reioyce.* Hee would haue vs loue God for his names ſake, that is to ſay, becauſe he is ſoueraigne Lord, wiſe in his counſels, iuſt in his actions, true in his promiſes, dwelling in glory which none can attaine vnto, poſſeſſing a ſoueraigne perfection. God, whoſe life is without beginning and ending, his eternitie without change, his greatneſſe without meaſure, his power without reſiſtance: who hath made the world by

by his Word, gouerneth it by his ſight, and ſhall ruinate it by his will: who in one vertue and perfection, which is his Eſſence, incloſeth all vertue, which is euery where diſperſed in the creatures; as diuers lines which meete in one center, doe diſperſe themſelues by their extention: for theſe conſiderations, God ought to be loued more than for the good which hee doth vs. Ieſus Chriſt himſelfe teacheth vs the ſame, in the prayer hee formed for vs; in which

he appointeth vs to demand the ſanctifying of his name, and the aduancement of his Kingdome, before we craue any thing for our profit. A deſire which ſo poſſeſſed the ſpirit of *Moſes*, and the Apoſtle Saint *Paul*, that forgetting themſelues they deſired rather to be blotted out of the Booke of life, and to be accurſed, then that God ſhould not be glorified.

Wherefore to plant in vs this loue, which loueth God for his owne ſake, it is neceſſary to know

know ſo farre forth as wee may, what he is in himſelfe, & wherefore ſoueraignly to be beloued.

Wee naturally loue beauty: now light is the chiefe of beauties, without which, all other beauties doe nothing differ from deformities. God then beeing the Chiefe light, is neceſſarily the chiefeſt beauty: *He is the Father of lights*, ſaith Saint *Iames*. *The fountaine of light is in him, and through his light we ſee clerely*, ſaith *Dauid* in the 35. Pſalme. For this

cauſe, when he firſt ſet his hand vnto the creation, he began with the light, as a thing beſt repreſenting his nature. Hee is the Sunne of iuſtice: the Sunne which ſetteth not, which maketh no ſhadow; vnto which all things are tranſparent: which not only enlighteneth the eyes, but euen giueth ſight. And iudge you what this Soueraigne brightneſſe is, ſeeing that *the Seraphins ſtanding before the Throne are dazled, and faine to couer their faces with their wings*, as *Eſai* ſaith, being

Pſal. 146. 4

Eſay. 6. 2.

being not able to endure ſo great a ſplendor. For if at the glorious apparition of the humanity of Ieſus Chriſt, the Sunne ſhall bee darkened as ſome little light at the appearing of a greater, what may bee the ſplendor of his Diuinity?

The life of God.

If you will conſider the life of God, ours is but a ſhadow, and nothing in compariſon. For our life is a flowing and ſucceſſion of parts: but God poſſeſſeth his life entirely at one inſtant, & all at once. He

who will know what the life of God is in comparison of mans life, let him compare the Sea with some little brooke. 1. The sea is very great, and the brook very little. 2. The Sea budgeth not from his place, but the brooke runneth still forth, and is alwaies a new water. 3. The waters of the Sea come from no other place; but all running waters come from the sea, and returne thither. The like is the life of God compared with ours. 1. His life is infinite, and ours very short.

ſhort. 2. His life conſiſteth in reſt, and to poſſeſſe all his life at one inſtant: but our life is a fluxe, and ſucceſſion of parts. 3. His life commeth from none other: but our life commeth from him, Act. 17. ver. 28. and returneth vnto him againe, as *Salomon* ſaith in the 12. of *Eccleſiaſtes: the earth returneth vnto the earth, as it was before, and the ſpirit vnto God which gaue it.*

The knowledge of God, what it is.

Gods knowledge is alſo a bottomeleſſe pit. He knoweth all things, yea euen ſuch as are not.

Things paſſed, are not paſſed vnto him: the future are preſent before him. Hee ſoundeth the heart: he ſeeth thorow the cloake of hypocriſie. Wee behold things one after another, but he ſeeth them all at one view: as if a man were all eye, and ſhould ſee al that were about him, without turning himſelfe. Wee ſee things becauſe they are: on the contrary, things are, becauſe God ſeeth them. For in God to ſee, is as much as to will: and his will is, to do. To know things, we

wee looke vpon them: but GOD, to know things, looketh on himselfe, because that in his wisedome hee hath the Models of all things, & in his will, the sentence of all chances.

His holines.

How admirable also is his holinesse! It infinitely surpasseth the holinesse of Angels and saints: as it is said in the booke of *Iob*, chap. 15. *Behold, hee hath no assurance in his Saints, and the heauens are not pure in his sight: how much more abominable and vile is man, who drinketh ini-*

iniquitie like water. Euen as the holy Scripture calleth the higheſt heauen, the heauen of heauens, becauſe it incloſeth the inferior, ſo alſo it calleth God, the holy of holies, becauſe his holineſſe incloſeth that of all the Saints, as being infinitely inferior. The holineſſe of the creature is a quality: that of God is his ſubſtance. God is holy of himſelfe; but men and Angels are not ſaints, but becauſe God hath ſanctified them.

His iuſtice.

Alſo, after a cleane contrary manner vnto men,

men, is he iuſt. For men are iuſt, becauſe they doe iuſt things. In God it is otherwiſe: for the things are iuſt, becauſe God doth them: for he is iuſtice it ſelfe. Wherefore, he is iuſt for no other cauſe but for that he doth according to his will: according to which hee hath giuen vs his Law, the perfect rule of iuſtice; which he not only ſetteth before vs, but alſo wtiteth it in vs, and engraueth it with his finger in the ſtone, as he promiſeth vs in the 31. of Ieremy: *I will put my Law*

Law into them, and will write it in their hearts. Hee loueth Iuſtice and truth. *He hateth the workers of iniquity, hee rooteth out lyers, hee hateth the bloudthirſty and deceitfull man*, Pſal. 5.

His goodnes

What ſhall wee ſay of his goodneſſe? through which hee loueth them which hate him, by which hee cauſeth his Sunne to ſhine vpon the iuſt and vniuſt, the good and bad: by which hee raineth down his goodneſſe, euen into the mouthes which are open to blaſpheme him.

Aboue

Aboue all, this infinite goodneſſe ſhineth in the perſon of his Son: This Sonne ſo begotten before all eternity, that he yet now begetteth him: Sonne without beginning of time, Sonne of the like age as his Father: Eſſentiall Word, eternall Wiſedome, GOD euerlaſtingly bleſſed: That Sonne which *Eſay* calleth *the Father of Eternitie*, would make himſelfe the Sonne of man, to the end that wee might bee children of God; yea was content to be borne in a ſtable, to

Eſa.9.

to the end that wee might be receiued into heauen ; to bee borne amongſt beaſts, to the end that we might be companions with Angels. Hee who is the Word it ſelfe, was content to ſtammer as a child, to the end that we might ſpeake vnto God in all libertie. Hee who is the bread of life, was content to bee an hungred to the end wee might be ſatisfied. He who is the fountaine of life, was content to bee a-thirſt, to the end our ſoules might be moyſtned.

ned. Briefly, he who is life it ſelfe, hath ſuffered death, that he might giue vs life. All this for vile creatures, yea, enemies vnto God, that hee might make them of ſlaues vnto Satan, his owne children, and tranſport them from hell into his Kingdome: theſe are the bottomeleſſe pits of the bounty and goodneſſe of God, which doe gently ſwallow vp our ſouls, there is pleaſure to loſe ones ſelfe therein. For theſe are the bottomeleſſe depths of the grace of God, which paſſe

passe our vnderstanding, but doe recreate our hearts; which giue matter of admiration, and also no lesse subiect of consolation. Here are the highest witnesses of his loue: here are all his fatherly affections laid open; all the riches of that grace, which the Angels themselues admire, and as Saint *Peter* saith, *endeuour to pry profoundly into*; louing in this case the goodnesse of God, not for their owne profit, but in respect of God himselfe: for Iesus Christ is not come into

into the world for their redemption.

Now to what end all this, but that wee ſhould loue him who hath ſo much loued vs, and admire with ioy the treaſures of his grace? O God, as thy greatneſſe is incomprehenſible, ſo alſo thy bounty is infinite: our ſpirits are ſtopped with this contemplation; our words are beneath our thoughts, and our thoughts yet much lower than the truth. We ſpeake of this greatneſſe but ſtammeringly, our praiſes do abaſe

baſe thee, wee draw the picture of the Sun with a cole. But, O God, raiſe vp our ſoules to thee : and if our ſpirits bee too weake to know thee, make our affections ardent to loue thee. Thou who waſt pleaſed to be our Father, touch our hearts with a filiall affection .Thou which giueſt vs occaſion to loue thee, giue vs alſo the motions thereof. For, as much as wee are poore in meanes, ſo much are we vncapable to receiue them, and to loue thee after hauing receiued them,

them, if thou thy ſelfe doſt not plant thy loue in vs.

All theſe coſiderations doe raiſe vp our ſpirits to loue God, not for our ſelues, but for his owne ſake : which appeareth alſo in this, that our loue to God cannot bee well directed, if it bee not formed vpon the modell of that loue wherewith God hath loued vs. Now God loueth vs for the loue of himſelfe, as hee ſaith by the mouth of *Eſay*: *It is I, it is I, that blotteth out thy ſinnes for mine owne ſake,* *Eſay* 43.

ſake. And it is the prayer which *Daniel* maketh in his 9. chap. *Lord heare, Lord pardon, Lord tarry not, but haſten for thine owne ſake; for thy name hath beene called vpon this city, and vpon thy people.* God conſidereth that wee beare his image: hee conſidereth that wee are vnworthy of his grace, but that it is a thing worthy of his bounty, to doe good vnto the vnworthy, and which is more, to make them worthy by doing them good. He conſidereth that his Church is like

vnto

vnto a flocke which carieth his name, and is called, The people of God; and therefore he will not let it be Satans prey, nor a matter of triumph vnto the aduerſarie.

The third degree of the loue of God.

THE third degree or ſteppe, is ſo to loue GOD aboue all things, that wee ſhould loue nothing in the world but for his ſake. For example, there are many perſons and many things in the world that

that wee cannot keepe our ſelues from louing, yea, and it would bee ill done not to loue them. So a Father loueth his children, a wife her husband, our kindred, allies, neighbours and friends haue part in this amity. So a man loueth his health, his houſe, his land, his ſtudy, &c. To goe about to diſpoſſeſſe a man of the loue of theſe things, would be an inhumane doctrine, and more then tending to brutality. *He is worſe then an infidell, that hath not care of his familie.* ſaith

saith the Apostle. Piety rooteth not out these affections, but doth husband them; and of mistresses which they were, maketh them but handmaids vnto the loue and feare of the Lord: No more than *Iosua* would kill the Gibeonites, but subiected them vnto the seruice of Gods house. For then doth a Father loue his children as he ought, if in bringing them vp, he purpose to vse them as men do yong plants, which shall one day bring forth fruit to the glory of God. If he

so remember himselfe to bee their Father that hee bee yet more mindefull that God is his. Then a man loueth his friends as hee ought, when he loueth them because they loue God, and because hee seeth the Image of God shining in them. So we shall then iustly loue health when wee shall loue it, not because it is more gamesome & without paine, but because it bringeth vigor vnto our bodies, and liberty vnto our mindes to serue God in our vocation. The like ought

to

to bee ſaid of riches, of honours, of knowledge, things which one may honeſtly loue; prouided that their loue doe not diſtract vs from the loue of God, but may rather thereto aduance and helpe vs to performe good workes. And as there is not any ſo little Brooke, but it leadeth vnto the Sea: ſo let theſe goodneſſes of God, ſeeme they neuer ſo ſmall, lead our thoughts to this great depth of the goodneſſe and greatneſſe of God. Briefly, all our liues and affections towards

our neighbours, ſhall bee well ſquared out, when they ſhall bee branches and brooks of Gods loue, & a reflexion of our ſight, which from God glanceth vpon his image. Neuer loue the perſons for that which is about them, but for what is in them. Eſteeme not of men, as of purſes, for the money which is therein. If you honour a man becauſe he is well clothed, by conſequẽce ought we to ſalute ſattin in whole peeces. If you accoũt of a mã for his honors ſake, you tie his

his dignity to his titles and to his habit: which things being taken away, there is no more of any thing which ought to be loued; as an horse which carrieth an Idoll, which being taken away, hath no more reuerence done about him. On the contrary, if you loue a man because hee feareth God, because hee is firme in the faith, forward in the knowledge of GOD, true in his words, iust in his actions, charitable towards the afflicted, burning with the zeale of Gods House,

you ſhall neuer want occaſion to loue him. Take away from him his goods, his honours, yea his clothes, yea euen his bodie; all theſe ornaments will remaine, and that excellency which conſiſteth in the Image of GOD, and the graces of his Spirit.

I am not Ignorant that the ſecrets of mens hearts are very deepe; and oftentimes the friends which a man chooſeth for vertuous, doe become vicious, or elſe ſhew they were neuer otherwiſe.

wiſe. In this caſe the man which loues God, ought to reprehend his friend, and to reforme him, if he can poſſible. Flattery hath taken away from true friendſhip all his termes, except the liberty to reprehend. To bee afraid to chide ones friend, leſt wee ſhould offend him, is a reſpect full of cruelty: as if when he were ready to be drowned, thou ſhouldſt feare to catch him by the haire of the head, leſt hee ſhould leeſe a haire or two. If by theſe reprehenſions thy friend

doe not amend, the friendſhip of a man muſt then giue place vnto Gods loue. Wee muſt do like *Moſes*, who made vſe of his rod whilſt it was a rod, but fled from before it when it became a Serpent. And yet in this caſe it were better to ſeparate our ſelues by little & little, and to vnſow friendſhip, rather than to teare it aſunder.

Vnto all theſe difficulties the loue of God ſerueth as a rule. Many heathen haue gathered a number of precepts of friend-

friendſhip, but haue not diſcouered this ſecret, which ruleth all their rules, that is, to learne firſt to loue God, & to cauſe our friendſhips to be deriued frõ his loue. Such as the braine is vnto the ſinewes, the liuer vnto the veines, and the heart vnto the arteries, that very ſame is the loue of God vnto humane friendſhips, that is to ſay, they are but threeds and branches which depend thereon. This diuine loue not being therein, friendſhips are no friendſhips, but a conſpiration; an accord

or agreement to a disagree with God: friendships grounded on pleasure or vpon gaine which cease when pleasures leese their taste through age, or when profit deminisheth, or is not equally distributed: but friendships grounded on the loue of God, are firme, because they are grounded vpon a sure foundation. Which loue ought so farre to aduance it selfe, that for the loue of God wee ought not onely to loue our friends, but euen our enemies, because God wil-

willeth it, Math. 5. Becauſe that among theſe enmities, ſome markes of Gods Image doe yet appeare; becauſe they are as it were roddes in Gods hand for our amendment, and inforcements vnto his feare.

The fourth degree of the loue of God.

To hate ones owne ſelfe for the loue of God.

WE are not yet at the higheſt. For we muſt come euen to the hating of our ſelues for the loue of God: For euen as there is not in man, any loue more ſtrong

ſtrong or more naturall than the loue of our ſelues: ſo is it that ſame which moſt reſiſts the loue of God, and which is moſt vneaſy to be ſurmounted. That which the ſhirt is in our cloathing, the ſame is the loue of our ſelues in our affections, to wit, that which is laſt put off. There we are to fight a great combat: it is as it were Satans laſt intrenchment, from whence hee is vneaſily driuen away. Yet none can loue God as he ought, who hateth not his own nature;

ture ; who is not grieued at his owne desires, and makes not mortall war against them, being desirous to finish this combat by death, and to bee dissolued, that hee might bee with God : readie to be prodigall of his blood, that hee may be sparing of Gods glory : waxing weary of this body of ours, as of a mouing prison or portable sepulcher : like vnto him that being in prison, looketh thorow the grates, desiring his liberty : so looke you not to get out at the doore, you shall onely get

get out through the ruines thereof by the destruction of this body: as when the prison sinketh, and the prisoner escapeth at some breach thereof. Hee which shall haue most made warre with himselfe, shall haue the more peace with God: hee which shall not haue pardoned himself, God shall pardon him: hee which shall haue despised, yea hated his owne life, he shall saue it.

Luke 9. & 14.

Here is the fourth degree or step of loue, and the highest that man can reach vnto in this life.

life. It was this degree of loue, which made the Apoſtle to cry out : *Alas miſerable man that I am, who ſhall deliuer mee from the body of this death ?* It was this degree of loue that cauſed *Dauid*, hauing a ſcepter in his hand, being vanquiſher of his enemies, and filled with earthly riches and honour, to acknowledge himſelfe but a ſtranger & wayfaring man vpon earth. It is this degree of loue which hath ſuſtain'd Martyrs in their torments, the heat wherof hath bin hotter than the

Rom.7. 4.

Pſal.39. & 129.

the heat of the fire : can you thinke that they had their muſcels of ſteele, or bodies vncapable of torment and paine ? it is not ſo. But as the heat of a feauer dries vp outward vlcers, and a leſſer heat is ſurmounted by a greater: ſo the interior heat of Gods loue did ſurmount the heat of the flame, and had more ſtrength to ſuſtaine them than pain had power to preuaile againſt them. Martyrs, whoſe vertues do yet vnto this day ſuſtaine our vices ; whoſe aſhes doe yet heat our cold-

coldneſſe; whoſe blood doth yet cry, ſpeaking both for the truth of the Goſpell, & againſt our ſlackneſſe, who in a little time are ſo far degenerate from their conſtancie: Surely if they doe not ſerue vs for an example, they will ſerue vs for a reproach and condemnation.

Now to come to this degree of loue, we muſt haue a long and hard combat: for our fleſh is rebellious & mutinous, & couetouſneſſe ſo rooted therin, that to pluck it vp (as witneſſeth the Son

Son of God himſelfe) is as if man ſhould cut off a hand, or pluck out an eye. and Saint *Paul* alſo calleth *our deſires, our members*. Notwithſtanding God ſaith that *he will make an end of his worke in our infirmity* : hee *maketh vs to bee victorious, but after many falls*. Oftentimes man beeing placed as in a croſſe way, betweene the Spirit and the fleſh, betweene the loue of God and the loue of the world ; hee feeleth contrary ſuggeſtions, and a maruellous combat. How many times

Math 5.

Coloſſ. 3.

2 Cor. 12.

Galat. 5.

times commeth it to passe, that after the loue of God hath had the vpper hand, and that the faithfull hath resolued to be good, by and by his desires do reassẽble themselues; and giue a new assault vnto the feare of God? the faithfull being thus assailed, either with some appetite of reuenge, of rapine, or lust, shall feele this loue of God speaking thus vnto him in his heart: Miserable man, whither goest thou? doth not God see this? despisest thou his threatnings? reiectest thou

thou his promises? forgettest thou thy vocation? wherefore wouldst thou grieue the Spirit of God? wherefore wouldest thou bring a scandall vpon his Church? where are the promises which thou hast made him? where is thy mindfulnesse of his benefits? Is this the way to the kingdome of heauen? Art thou assured that being fallen, thou shalt rise againe? For a little pleasure mingled with bitternesse, wilt thou trouble the peace of thy conscience? For a little

por-

pottage of hearbes, wilt thou neglect thy birthright? At these suggestions the faithfull will slay himselfe, hee will sigh before God; and like *Samson*, hee will breake the bonds of his desires: but all is not yet done, nor this rebellious flesh is not yet quelled. For after these holy resolutions, wee haue for certaine spaces great dulnesse againe. Then the deuill espieth occasion, if hee see vs in bad company, if hee see vs idle, if we haue discontinued prayre, reading, or hearing of

of the Word of God, then our desires doe rowze themselues vp againe; then the contrary suggestions of the flesh and the spirit struggle together for mastery: which maketh the life of the faithfull oftentimes seeme bitter, euen to the desiring of death to end this combat. O miserable nature enemy to it one selfe! O ingrafted and deep-rooted corruption! O mutinous sedition, which wouldst bring vs back into Egypt! which after our coming out Sodom, makest vs look backe

backe againe, like vnto *Lots* wife; and makeſt vs loth to leaue the euill we are come from. Corruption which troubles our beſt actions by bad ſuggeſtions, and beſmeareth them with ſome euill. If we thinke vpon death, our fleſh ſuggeſteth vnto vs, that there is yet time enough to thinke thereon. If we heare or reade the reprehenſions of Gods Word, it perſwadeth vs that it is ſpoken vnto others. If we thinke of heauen, it ſaith, we ſhal come time enough thither. If thou thine

thinkeſt to giue almes, it will ſoftly ſuggeſt in thine eare: what know I that I ſhall haue no need thereof my ſelfe? If thou wouldſt reprehend thy friend for his amendment, it will draw thee by a cruell reſpect, namely, for feare of offending him. Each good affection hath as it were two eares like a pot, by which the fleſh & the world take hold to hinder the execution thereof.

Heere then we muſt carefully haue recourſe to Gods aſſiſtance, and imitate *Rebecca*, who had

had recourſe vnto praier when two children ſtroue in her wombe: a moſt expreſſe figure of theſe two men which are in euery faithfull perſon; the one which is the old, the other which is the new man; the one, our corrupted nature, the other the regenerate Spirit, which doe couet one againſt another, as ſaith the Apoſt. *Paul.* Wherfore alſo God anſwered *Rebecca*, *The elder ſhall ſerue the younger.* Gal. 5. 17. For the old man muſt be ſubiected vnto the new, vntill he be fully

ranked in due obedience vnto God.

The fifth degree of the Loue of God.

How the Saints in glory doe loue God.

THere remaineth now the laſt and chiefeſt degree or ſtep, which is the loue wherewith we ſhall loue God in the glory celeſtiall: For we loue things according as wee know them. We ſhall therfore loue God much more then, becauſe wee ſhall much better know him. *Now* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *wee know in part, now we*

1. Cor. 13. 12.

ſee

see as in a glasse obscurely, but then wee shall see face to face. Our loue which seeth from a farre off, and which is distracted by diuers obiects, shall then see neere at hand, and shall wholly be fixed vpon God. And as when two great high swelling riuers come to encounter one another, they make maruellous inundation: so the loue of our selues and the loue of God, are like two streames which neuer ioyne themselues together on earth, but shall meet in heauen. What

then shall the vehemencie be of both these affections, when they shall be mingled both together, and ioyned in one loue? *For when in louing God, wee shall loue our selues, because God shall dwell in vs, and because that* (saith the Apostle *S. Iohn*) *we shall be like vnto him.* 1 Iohn 3. Neither are wee to doubt but that the Angels and Saints do loue themselues ardently, but with a loue which distilleth from the loue of God. O happie and an admirable loue of ones selfe, which is

is mingled with the loue of God. Let vs forbeare to loue our ſelues vntill that time: and let vs loue nothing in our ſelues but what doth prepare vs & entertain vs with the hope of this loue.

But becauſe this loue with which we ſhall loue God in Paradiſe, doth grow from the view and contemplation of his face, (for loue is kindled by the ſight) let vs learne what ſight this ſhall be, that ſhall cauſe this our loue. Our bodily eies ſee things by two means, either by receiuing

uing their images ; for ſo we ſee the bodies expoſed to our view ; or by receiuing into our eyes the thing it ſelfe which wee ſee : ſo wee ſee the light, which wee ſee in ſuch ſort as that it entereth euen into our eies. Now God who is the chiefeſt of lights, will make our ſoules to ſee him in heauen in this latter faſhion. *For he dwelleth in his Saints, and is in them all in all.* But in this life he cauſeth himſelfe to bee ſeen by Images, that is, by the contemplation of his works in which hee

hee hath imprinted a picture (as it were) of himselfe, and the expresse markes of his vertue. Therefore wee shall then see our God in such sort as wee now see the light : but that now wee see it not but by the windowes of the body, that is, by the eyes: for then wee shall receiue throughout all our parts the light of God, which shall enlighten vs on all sides with the beames of his holinesse. Euen as if a man were all eye throughout, & should receiue light in himselfe

on all sides.

This same sight of God, will make vs like vnto God, as Saint *Ioh.* saith, *We shall be like vnto him, for wee shall see him as he is.* For as a looking-glasse cannot bee exposed to the Sunne, but it will shine like the same: so God receiueth none to contemplate his face, but hee transformeth them into his owne likenes, by the irradiation of his light and perfection. And as God is charitie and loue it selfe, as the same Apostle teacheth, it is necessary that the

1. John 2.

Vrim & Thummim 1. Iohn 4.8.

the creature being by this view made like vnto God, ſhould alſo be ſeized with this loue, & enflamed with this ſpirituall fire: A fire which hath giuen name vnto the Seraphins, ſo called, becauſe of their ardour, which is nothing elſe but the loue of God, the feruour of their zeale, and their readineſſe to doe him ſeruice.

Here neceſſarily muſt end theſe degrees or ſteppes of loue, and our meditation can mount no higher: it is the laſt ſteppe of *Iacobs* ladder,

by which we mount vp vnto God.

Chap. III.

Of the markes and effects of the Loue of God.

VVE all make profession to loue God, but few loue him seriously. By this profession we deceiue men, yea we deceiue our selues, but cannot deceiue God. Wherefore it is necessary to bring hither the touchstone, to discerne the true and pure loue of God from the

the falſe, and of baſe allay.

As there are fiue degrees of true loue, ſo are there alſo fiue marks to diſcerne it.

1 The firſt marke of the true loue of God, is, *that it quencheth all vnchaſte loues.*

2 The ſecond marke and effect of this loue is, *that it bringeth peace and tranquillity to the mind.*

3 The third is, *charity towards our neighbours.*

4 The fourth is, *the pleaſures to communicate often with God.*

5 The fift is, *the Zeale of*

of the glory of God, which reioyceth or ſorroweth according as God is honoured or diſhonoured.

Whoſoeuer feeleth in himſelfe theſe effects, may aſſure himſelfe that hee loueth God with a true affection: yea although that ſome coldneſſe chance amongſt this holy ardour, and that the loue of himſelfe bee mingled withall; yet this loue for being weake ſhall not let to be true, prouided, it do daily go on tending vnto perfection. Let vs run ouer againe each one of theſe marks,

marks, that wee may know them more perfectly.

The first marke of Gods Loue.

THere are 3. sorts of loue: the one whereof, is euer good: the other is euer bad: the third, good of his owne nature, but accidentally bad, because of our bad disposition. That which is alwaies good, is the loue of God, in which it is impossible to sinne through excesse: and in this point it is good to let

That vnchaste loues must be extinguished.

let slip the reyns of our desires. The measure of louing God, is to loue him without measure. The loue which is alwaies bad, is the loue of murder, of theft, & of vnchaste pleasures, &c. The loue which being good of it owne nature, becommeth euill by accident is the loue of meate, of drinke, of ease, or recreation; appetites which are naturally good & necessary, but which wee make to bee bad by excesse and intemperance.

The loue of God doth di-

diuerſly behaue it ſelfe towards the other two ſorts of loue: for it ranketh the latter within the limits of mediocrity, and teacheth vs to ſatisfie our neceſſity, and not our curioſity. It reiecteth all farre fetched delicates being the diſtaſte of a proud ſtomacke, which awakeneth it ſelfe with artificiall meanes: teaching vs to nouriſh this body, ſo that it may not be a hinderance to the ſoule: to watch and be ſober, leſt we enter into temptation. As for the ſecond loue, it can in no wiſe

wise remaine with the loue of God : but the feare of God doth wholly cut it off: because that in a thing entirely bad, wee are not to seeke for any mediocritie. None can be a fornicator, an adulterer, or a murderer by measure ; for the least inclination vnto these things, is sinne against God.

But aboue all, the strength of Gods loue is shewn in rooting out of our hearts vnchaste loue, which kindleth in the mindes of worldly men a fire-brand of filthy

thy desires, which defile our soules with a thousand beastly thoughts, and importunate; which of our bodies dedicated to bee temples of God, make an infectious brothell, and (as saith *S. Paul*) of the members of Christ do make thē the members of a harlot. Pleasures which weaken the body, coole the spirit, and abate courage, which after the strength is consumed, leaue yet a desire. Infamous pleasures, which place men beneath beastes; of which, man in this point ought

ought to learne the laws of continencie and sobriety. Traiterous pleasures, which imbrace a man to strangle him; dally with him on the lap of delight as *Dalilah* played with *Samson*, that they may deliuer him, not to the Philistians, but vnto the deuill, who hauing poked out the sinners eyes, oftentimes leads him this way vnto the temple of the Idoll. Yet as if this were not enough, man hath chosen out a painefull way vnto his pleasures; they are not esteemed, if

if not troubleſome. The ſtolne waters are ſweeteſt, ſaith *Salomon*; and the malice of man ſuppoſeth all other entries better than the legitimate.

The loue of God entring into the ſpirit of any one for to purge it, doth preſently void out this filth, and ſmothereth vp this loue by his greater force: which teacheth vs to loue in our neighbours, not their bodily beauty, but their ſoules ornaments. This holy loue hauing for his obiect the chiefe of ſpirits,

What is true beauty.

rits, loueth consequently in men their spirituall beauty, a beauty which consisteth in the Image of God: an Image, whose principall lineaments are iustice & holinesse. A beauty which is not superficiall as that of the body, which hideth within it selfe blood, braine, and things which one may not behold without horror; but it is a beautie which extendeth it selfe vnto the bottome, as the beauty of a diamond, or of the light it selfe. The beauty of the body, is but a flower which

which is withered with age : but the beautie of the ſoule is not ſubiect vnto time ; and which is more, the wrinkles which it hath, are done out with time. Many women might haue bin more happy, if they had beene leſſe beautifull ; for their beauty hath plentifully afflicted them : but ſpirituall beauty is alwaies accompanied with Gods bleſſings. Beſides, conſider attentiuely the faireſt viſage of the world, and you will become not a whit the more faire your ſelfe, but

but ſhall rather ſeeme the fouler being neere it. But carefully to contemplate a ſoule which God hath embelliſhed with vertue, will make you become vertuous, and will forme you according to his example. Carnall eyes perceiue not this beauty, and pleaſure knoweth not what it is. For as a Horſe louing a Mare, thinketh that in the world there is no other beauty: ſo the carnall and ſenſuall man thinketh there is no other beauty, but tha- which through the

ſight

ſight toucheth his deſires. But the view of the faithfull pierceth further; and oftentimes cleane through a corporall beauty, ſeeth the very image of the deuill. Contrariwiſe, the inward beauty is oftentimes vnder an exterior foulenesſe: as that of a ſlubbered Diamond; and that of Ieſus Chriſt during his opprobrious handling; whereof *Eſay* in the 53. chap. ſaith, that there was not in him either forme or beauty: & yet in the 45. Pſalme, he is called the moſt faire amongſt

mongſt the Sonnes of men: As the beauty of the Church, whereof it is ſaid in the firſt of Canticles, that ſhee is browne, and yet faire, being blacke without, and burnt with afflictions, which notwithſtanding blot not out her inward beauty.

Therefore that women curious of their beauty, may rather ſtudie to adorne themſelues inwardly, as is ſaid in the 45. *Pſalme*, *The Kings daughter is full of Glory within*: Let them take heed, leſt, in decking artificially

tificially their bodies, they become a ſnare of deſires, an inſtrument in the deuils hand. A ſouldier hauing a ſword that hath ſurely ſerued him in many combats, will be carefull to ſcower and poliſh it: and doe we maruell if the woman hauing ſerued Satan to ouerthrow *Adam*, bee carefully decked & embeliſhed by him; and that women are ſo curious in ornaments, by the ſuggeſtion of the deuill?

But wee whom God hath honored with his

knowledge, to the end we might bee inflamed with this loue, let vs ſhut our eies to theſe allurements, poſſeſſing (as ſaith S. *Paul*) our veſſels in holineſſe: abſtaine your ſelues not onely from euill, but alſo from all appearance and occaſions of euill. Eſchue idleneſſe, for it is the pillow of vices. Let Satan, comming to aſſaile you, find you euer occupied. Flie bad companie, filthy talke, bookes of loue; for they are fire-brands of luſt, the hookes and baits of the deuill. None commeth

commeth to do euill but by theſe acceſſaries : yea the euill is already in theſe acceſſaries. Many will ſay, that they are chaſt of body, but their eyes, their eares, and their thoughts are culpable of luſt. Yet Chriſt ſaith, that he who looketh on his neighbours wife to luſt after her, hath already committed adultery. The beſt company and the beſt buſines to diuert our mindes from this euill, is the carefull reading of the Word of God ioyned vnto prayer. Saint *Au-*

guſtine in the 8. booke of his Confeſſions, cap. 8. & 12. ſaith, that when he was vpon tearmes of rendering himſelfe a Chriſtian, that which moſt troubled him, was, that he muſt leaue his fornication; and that in this combatful anguiſh hee withdrew himſelfe into a garden, where twice he heard the voice of a child, as it were, cõming from the houſes hard by, ſaying, *Take and reade.* At this voice hee tooke the booke of the Epiſtles of Saint *Paul*, and chanced at the firſt opening

opening of the booke, on this text of the 13. chapter to the Romans, where hee saith: *Let vs walke honestly as in the day time, not in riot and drunkennes, not in chambering and wantonnesse, neither in strife or enuy; but put yee on the Lord Iesus Christ, and haue no care of the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.* There was enough for him: and thereupon, were it that this voice came from God, or that it chanced by other meanes, hee resolued to follow the counsell of the Apostle,

who without looking for any reuelation therupon, doth sufficiently manifest to vs the will of GOD touching the laying off of these desires.

The second marke of the loue of God.

Peace and tranquillity of the soule.

THis same loue bringeth forth another effect, by which it is to be knowne, to wit, the peace and tranquillity of the soule: it chaseth away feares, assageth cares, sweetneth afflictions. For what euill soeuer

uer happeneth him who loueth God, hee will euer remember the sentence of the Apostle, Rom. 8. *That all things turne to the best for them which loue God.* Euen their crosses become blessings: their bodily pouerty is a spirituall diet vnto them; their banishments teach them to leaue the world: their sequestring frõ honours is their approach vnto God: their enemies are their Physitians, causing them to bee warie, and to liue in Gods feare. Their corporall diseases are spiri-

tuall cares: death is an entrie into life, and a bringing foorth, by which the ſoule is deliuered of the body, as of her laſt after-birth; and commeth forth of a dark den, to enter into Gods light. The Paſſage thorow afflictions, reſembles the paſſage of the Red Sea: for the wicked are ouerwhelmed therein, they are vnto them forerunners of damnation; but the faithfull and Gods people finde that way a paſſage to the Land of promiſe.

This very ſame loue of

of God, will ſuggeſt vnto the faithfull this thought: Seeing that I loue God, it is certaine that he loueth me. For S. *Iohn* ſaith that *wee loue him becauſe he loued vs firſt.* For I had not naturally in me any inclination to loue him; but it was hee who louing mee, framed my heart to loue him. Now if God loue mee he intendeth my good; and hee can doe all that he will, nothing hapneth but according to his will. He will not then permit that any euill happen me; he will

1 Iohn. 4.

turne my euils vnto good for my ſaluation: he will lead me thereunto through a way thornie vnto fleſh, but healthfull to my ſoule. Briefly, the loue of God excludeth feares, and is the prop of our aſſurance, as ſaith the Apoſtle Saint *Iohn*: *There is no feare in charity, but perfect charity driueth forth feare.* This ſame loue ſweetneth affli ctions, and maketh our Lords yoake eaſie and tolerable. For you ſhall ſee by experience, that in a houſe where loue is great betweene the husband

1 Iohn 4.8.

husband and the wife, they paſſe the bad time ouer with content, and haue mutuall conſolation one of another: yea, to haue a faithfull friend, into whoſe boſome you may ſhead your teares, and powre forth your complaints, doth bring a man much eaſe, although it bring no remedy: how much more ſhall the faithfull ſoule find and feele in the loue of his God? of God, who not only knoweth our euils, counteth our ſighes, laieth vp our teares

teares in his veſſels; but who can and will remedy them: and not onely remedy them, but turn them to good, giuing vs in our affl ctions, not onely occaſion to ſuffer, but euen matter of reioycing. So the faithfull ſpeake in the 46. Pſalme: *Let the waters of the Sea make a noyſe, and let the mountaines ſhake by the riſing of his waues; in the meane time the brooks of the riuer ſhall reioyce the citie of God.* The troubleſome waters are the people banded againſt God, as is expounded in

in the Apocal. chap. 17. Theſe brooks which in the meane time doe reioyce the holy city, are the inſtructiõs of Gods Word, whoſe voice is our conſolation. For in his afflictions the faithfull will turne aſide his eyes from his enemies, and from all ſecond cauſes, and will ſay: Lord, it is thou that haſt done it; I receiue this affliction at thy hand, make this proue healthfull vnto me, and permit not that I euer come to murmure againſt thee, or to kicke againſt the pricke. We ſwal-

ſwallow with the better reſolution a bitter potion, when it is preſented vs by a friendly hand whoſe ignorance or falſe-hood we feare not. We finde all theſe things in GOD, who moreouer makes venomes themſelues to prooue good medicines.

So the loue of God is a retrait and ſhelter againſt all anguiſh: it is the groũd of true peace: it is the prop of our aſſurance, which cauſeth vs to deſpiſe the threatnings of men; to looke on the enterpriſes of great

great men, and the rilings of people with diſdaine; which cauſeth vs to find eaſe on the rack, and to looke on deaths face with aſſurance, and take off his maske to ſee Ieſus Chriſt, which commeth to vs vnder that ſhew: which makes the faithfull to ſtand vpright in the midſt of the ruines of his country: this holy loue made S. *Paul* to ſay, Rom. 8. *If God bee with vs, who ſhall bee againſt vs? Hee which hath not ſpared his owne Son, but deliuered him ouer for vs, how ſhall not he giue*

vs

vs all things with him? Let vs likewise say, Hee that laieth vp our tears, will not hee gather vp our prayers? he, without whose prouidence a Sparrow lighteth not on the ground, would he permit that our soules should fal into hell for lacke of caring for them? He who extendeth his care to gather vp our tears, yea to count our haires, how much more care will hee haue of our soules, for which his son hath died? This same loue made *Dauid* say, Psal. 23. *Euen when I should*

ſhould walke in the way of the ſhadow of death, I would feare none euill: for thou art with me, thy rod and ſtaffe doe comfort me. Heereby we may iudge what difference there is betweene louing God and men. Let vs not ſpeake of the weaknes of our friends to deliuer vs, their little conſtancy in their loue, nor of the cruell officiouſneſſe of ſome friends who deſire to ſee their friends in trouble, to make them beholding vnto them for ſuccouring them. But let vs take that which is beſt and

and honeſteſt in our friendſhips: I ſay then, if there bee any one who loueth a dozen perſons faithfully, hee muſt then neceſſarily bee miſerable: for it is a very likely matter, that one of a dozen perſons will euer be in trouble, or ſicke, or afflicted. If then a man ſhall, according to the lawes of friendſhip, participate of his friends afflictions, ſhall hee not, by hauing many friends, bee in perpetuall miſery? And if any one of them be abſent, it is a ſubiect of

Loue is a thing full of care and feare.

of continuall apprehenſion. So that many are of opinion, that to bee obdurate, and without compaſſion, is commodious. Faithfull friendſhips are kinds of ſicknesſes ingendering feare, and which from diuers parts draw vnto themſelues griefe and compaſſion. The loue of God hath none of theſe incommodities: for wee loue him for whom wee can bee in no feare, and who puts vs out of all feare for our ſelues, and warranteth vs from all euill.

Now

Now if the loue of God be ſo full of reſt, in compariſon of the moſt faithful & honeſt friendſhips amongſt men; how much more then in compariſon of vnhoneſt loues which torture the conſcience, which hide themſelues for ſhame; where ſpending, ryot, iealouſie, lyings in wait, and alteration of humours, torment the mind with a perpetuall vnquietneſſe?

The third marke of the loue of God.

The loue of our neighbour.

IN the third place, the loue of God is manifested by the loue of ones neighbour. It is impossible to loue God & hate his Image; to loue Iesus Christ, who is the head, & hate our neighbors, who are his members: it were as if a man kissing another should tread on his toes, things vnsufferable: as saith *S. Iohn: Hee who saith he loueth God, and hateth his brother, is a liar: for who-so loueth not his*

1. *Ioh.* 4. 20

his brother whom he ſeeth, how can he loue God whom hee hath not ſeene? that is to ſay, if he haue not ſo much as naturall loue, how can he haue the ſupernatural? wherfore, in the ſummary of the law expreſſed in the Goſpell, vnto the loue of God is adioyned the loue of our neighbor, as a neceſſary conſequent, & an vndoubted proof. and the Apoſt. S. *Paul* ſaith, that *All the Law is accompliſhed in this word alone, Thou ſhalt loue thy neighbour as thy ſelfe.* Not that it is enough to loue ones neighbour, without

Gal. 5. 14.

out louing God; but becauſe the loue of ones neighbor doth neceſſarily preſuppoſe the loue of God.

Now if we ought to loue our neighbors for Gods ſake, it followeth that aboue all we ought to loue thoſe which loue God; following the commandement of the Apoſtle vnto the Galatians, chap. 6. *Let vs doe good vnto all, but principally vnto the houſhold of faith*; with whom wee haue many good things in common: to be together children of one father, and likewiſe brethren

thren of Ieſus Chriſt; noriſhed with the ſame meat, which is the word: of one houſhold, namely, the Church: trauellers and pilgrims together, cõbatants for one ſelfeſame cauſe, called vnto one ſelfeſame hope, coheires of one ſelfeſame kingdom. All which are conſiderations reſembling many lines which do all meet in one point: for theſe are obligations to loue one another, who doe all of vs meet in Ieſus Chriſt, in whom we are all one, becauſe we are one with him.

This

This charity amongst the faithfull, is extended two waies. The one is the charitable releeuing of our afflicted brethrē. The other is, peace and concord amongst our selues.

As touching our brotherly releefe, it necessarily commeth from the loue of God, as S. *Iohn* saith: *Who so shall haue goods in this world, and see his brother in necessitie, and shall shut vp his compassion, how shall the loue of God dwell in him?* Also, God appointeth himselfe a rewarder of almes, as done vnto

1. *Ioh.* 3. 17.

Brotherly releefe.

himselfe, yea euen vnto a cup of cold water, *Mat.* 10. *to giue vnto the poore, is to lend out money for vsury vnto God, Pro.* 19. Of all that we posses, wee shall saue nothing but that which we shall haue thus giuen. By this meanes (saith Iesus Christ in *Luke* 16.) *We make our selues friends, which shall receiue vs into the euerlasting tabernacles*: thou fear'st to leese thy mony by giuing it; and yet the bestowing it in almes, is the meanes to keepe it. Thou feareſt to leese thy mony by giuing it, and feareſt not

to

to leese thy selfe by keeping it. For our goods auariciously reserued, are not only spoiled, but doe also spoile and corrupt our spirits. It will be for this sin, that God will iudge the wicked at the latter day, *Mat.* 25. The wicked rich man, who despised the poore *Lazarus* craving a morsell of bread, doth now beg of *Lazarus* a droppe of water to allay his heate. An heate begun by the retention of those goods which were due to the poore, which (as Saint *Iames* saith) *shall consume* *Iames* 5.

the fleſh of the rich like fire : and are as a treaſure gathered for them againſt the latter day. And iuſtly are they ranked with murderers: For as there are two waies to put out a Lampe; eyther by blowing it, or not pouring in oile in good time : ſo the couetous man, if hee take not away the life of the poore by killing him; at leaſt he ſuffereth him to wither and drie away for lacke of pouring into him ſome liberality.

The root of this duty, is **the loue of** God which

which redounds vpon his members: wherefore alſo, as the loue of God is free and voluntary; ſo alſo muſt not our almes be forced or vnwillingly done, but free and voluntary. *God loueth a cheereſull giuer*, 2. *Cor.* 9. 7. ſaith the Apoſtle S. *Paul.* And to this purpoſe hee calleth there in that ſame place, *almeſdeeds, a ſeede.* A ſeede which wee caſt in the earth, but gather the crop in heauen. Seeing then wee muſt giue cheerefully, it is heere the contrary of that which

is said in the 126. Psalm. *Those which shall sow in teares, shall reape in ioy and triumph.* For hee who shall sow this reliefe with teares, shall reape with griefe. None shall reape with ioy in Heauen, if hee haue not ioyfully sowed vpon earth. An almes giuen, vnwillingly, doth not onely leese all reward, but also deserueth no pardon. It fareth alike with almes which are vain-gloriously giuen, and to be seen of men, which our Lord condemneth in the 6. of *Matthew*. Also

it

it fares alike with almes done of goods il gotten: who hauing enriched himſelfe by fraudulent meanes and extortion, thinks to appeaſe God by giuing part of his robberies in almes, goes about to corrupt God with preſents, and cals him to take part of the ſpoile. As in the Law God receiued not as an offring, either the price of a dog, or the hire of the letcher: ſo in the Goſpell, God will that almes (which the Apoſtle to the Hebrews calleth a ſacrifice) ſhould be of iuſt things, and

Heb. 13.16

gotten by labour : that *he who hath ſtolne, ſteale no more, but rather labour with his hands, that hee may haue to giue vnto him that hath neede, Epheſians 4.* Wherefore when Ieſus Chriſt in the *16.* of *Luke*, will that we giue almes of vniuſt riches, he calleth riches there euill, not becauſe they were vniuſtly gotten, but becauſe that ordinarily they are inticements and baites of iniquity : otherwiſe he would ſooner haue commanded them to bee rendered vnto ſuch as they had

had beene wrongfully taken from.

This same loue of God, produceth peace and concord amongst brethren. For it is impossible to loue GOD, without imitating him. Now *hee is the God of peace*, *Rom.* 16. Wee must therefore be children of peace, in imitation of him: for so are the faithfull called in the 10. of *Luke*. To this purpose in the 19. of the first of *Kings*, God is represented as not beeing in the storme and boisterous winde, but in the still and qui-

Agreement among brethren.

et found ; becauſe God is not amongſt confuſions and quarrels, amongſt perſons which eate vp one another, but amongſt thoſe which be at peace and vnity. But the deuill liueth vpon diſcord, and is friend vnto ſtrife. Euen as men cauſe two dogges or two Cockes to fight together for pleaſure, the lookers on encouraging them to the combat : ſo doubt you not, but when two men fight together, the Deuill pricketh them on, and taketh pleaſure thereat. Let vs take heed

heed left before we be aware, we make our ſelues the deuils bable or paſtime. We (I ſay) that be brothers, who haue al the world on our skirts; who by one ſelfe-ſame combat, doe tend to one ſelfe-ſame hope: called to repaire the breaches of Ieruſalem, to build againe the Houſe of God in the view and deſpite of the deuill. It is written in the 1. of Kings, chap. 6. that *Salomons* Temple was builded without any noyſe, there was no one ſtroke of a hammer heard. Let vs labour in

in the worke of God without any noiſe, and without ſtrife. And here may and ought to bee remembred the aduertiſement which *Ioſeph* gaue to his brethren, at their going out of Egypt, to returne to their father; hee ſent them away, and ſaid vnto them, *Fall not out by the way.* For what is the life of a faithfull man, but an iſſue out of Egypt, a voyage to returne home to our Father? Let vs not quarrell then on the way, let vs liue in peace, and the God of peace will

Gen. 45. 24.

will remaine with vs; whom we ſhall loue the more ardently, when we are ioyned in affections to loue him.

The fourth marke of the loue of God.

VVE preſume that ſuch are friends whom wee ordinarily ſee together. Communication and familiarity are the nurſes of friendſhip, yea more than good turnes. He which doth a pleaſure with a ſeuerity, withdrawing his company from all; who giues with a refuſing

Often communication with God.

ſing countenance, like one that ſhould fling his bread at a beggers head, vnbindes in binding, and is payed well enough, if his benefits bee pardoned. Friendſhip alſo requireth, that a friend ſhould, in all things be aduiſed by his friend, diſcharge vnto him his cares, diſcouer his ſorrowes, and powre all his griefe into his boſome, to take counſell of him if there be any remedy, and to eaſe himſelfe if there be none. This is then alſo one of the markes of the loue of God,

God, to wit, a frequent communication by the which the faithful Christian doth counsell or consolate himselfe with God.

For the man which loueth God, being to deliberate vpon any thing of importance, doth first consult with the oracle of Gods mouth, and enquireth after his will. As for example, vpon the choice of religion, he will not call the belly to counsel, nor worldly hopes; hee will not imitate the Shechemites, which tooke the seale of Gods coue- *Gen.34.23.*

couenant vpon them, to haue the ſubſtance & cattell of the children of *Iacob*; nor the Iewes which in the *6.* of Saint *Iohn* follow Chriſt to haue bread; he will not make Ieſus Chriſt ſerue him for a purueyor, nor Religion to be a Merchandize of the time, or a dependancy of his domeſticall affaires. The feare of men, ſhame, reſpect, worldly honors, couetouſnes, like blind and traiterous counſellors, ſhall not bee admitted to this counſell: but hee will withdraw himſelfe vnto God;

God; and after, hauing ardently craued his grace, he will resolue to beleeue nothing but what hee teacheth vs in his Word: wherein if there be any difficultie, yet that which remaineth cleare, is sufficient for our instructiō. Adde hereunto, that if he demand faithfully, in Iesus Christ his name, the grace to vnderstand enough for his saluation, Iesus Christ promiseth that all which we shall so demand in his name he will giue vs.

Likewise if he be to make a match, or chuse any

any vocation, hee will firſt counſell himſelfe with God, that he may chuſe that vocation in which he ſhall bee leaſt ſollicited to offend God, and in which hee ſhall haue moſt meanes to glorifie him. After this conſultation, humane wiſedome may be heard in her rank, not as a Miſtris to rule the roſt, but as a ſeruant, who ſpeaketh when hee is queſtioned: he ſhall propound what our forces are, what the preſent neceſſity is, what the courſes of the time, and the circumſtances of places and

and persons. In like sort, if there be any question of marriage, the faithfull will before all other things consult with Gods mouth, and will heare the Apostle S. *Paul* (1 *Cor.* 7.) commanding that it bee done in the Lord. And God himselfe in the 7. of *Deuteronomy*, charging vs not to contract mariage but with true beleeuers. So *Isaac* and *Iacob* were maried by the commandement of their Fathers; but *Esau* tooke vnto him wiues of the Gentiles, which were a bitternesse vnto

Gen. 26. 35.

vnto *Isaac* and *Rebecca*, I passe ouer the consideration of the inconueniences which doe spring therof: for at this time we doe seeke only after the proofes and effects of the true loue of God. For if a friend should marry himselfe without communicating the matter vnto his friend; might he not take occasion to say; You doe mistrust me, and doe all your businesse without speaking therof vnto me? Now if God hath communicated vnto vs al his coũsel, as saith S. *Paul*, *Act.* 20.

shall

shall we make difficulty to let him know ours? His counsell (I say) which is a bottomelesse depth of wisedome, full of wholesome and holy mysteries: on the contrary, our counsels, which are but light things, and wherein he will bee our counsellor for our good, and which hee knoweth without our communicating them. Certainly the word of God is our good counsellor, who counselleth vs without flattery, who ruleth vs without ambiguity: and the Prophet *Esay*, ch. 9. cal-

calleth Ieſus Chriſt *the Councellor*, not only becauſe hee hath manifeſted to vs the counſell of God in the Goſpell, but becauſe hee is to counſell vs in our doubts, and reſolue vs in our deliberations.

That which I ſay of our difficulties, ought alſo to be vnderſtood of our ſorrowes; in which wee ought to addreſſe our ſelues to God, make our complaint to him, powre out our teares, & diſcouer our afflictions, vnto him with a ſonlike liberty: and though hee know

know them well without this communicating, yet will he thereby giue vs eaſe and contentment. Take example hereof in the Pſalms of *Dauid* : where you haue an anatomie of the thoughts of the faithful, & the picture of a diuers agitation within him. You ſhall ſee many Pſalmes, as the 6. the 22. the 51. &c. wherin the beginnings are full of feare, and the entry full of anguiſh, and as it were within two fingers of deſpaire; but in the end you ſee nothing but ioy and aſ-

ſurance:

ſurance : ſo that you would thinke that the Pſalme were compoſed by two men of contrary humours. From whence cõmeth this ſo ſuddaine change? was it, that in the midſt of his prayer, ſome good newes arriued, which might allay his griefe? No ſuch matter : but thus, that according as he grew more and more feruent with God, his ſoule riſing from vnder her burthen, ſtayed her ſelfe vpon his promiſes, and came forth with peace & aſſurance. Who is that faithfull Chri-

Christian, who hath practiſed this exerciſe, and hath not felt eaſe? and if an obſtinate penſiueneſſe, which holdeth the hand ſtill on the wound, ſeize on our ſpirits and conſume them, ought it not to bee imputed vnto the want of communicating with God? for teares ſuppreſſed, procure double ſmart; and although but vnprofitably ſpent, yet do they diſcharge vs of griefe, and giue aire vnto the wound. But beeing ſpent before God, who hath bound himſelfe by promiſe, yea

euen by oath, not to abandon vs, doth bring vs a great consolation, before God (I say) who doth register our requests, yea euen preuenteth them, so farre forth as *Dauid* saith in the 32. *Psalme*, that God hath pardoned him his sin, not only after his praier, but euen as soone as hee had any will to craue it. For he requireth not any praiers of vs, because he hath need of our seruice, but because wee haue need of his grace: and that according to his iustice it cannot bee giuen

giuen to thoſe which ſhall not daigne to craue it. As the Sunne draweth vp vapours from the earth, not for it ſelfe, but to render them to the earth, in raine to moiſten & fatten it: ſo God, the true Sun of our ſoules, draws from vs our ſighes and prayers, not for his own profit, but to make them raine downe againe vpon vs in ſo many bleſſings. This ſame frequẽt communication with God in our afflictions will teach vs to turne away our eyes from men which do afflict vs, to-

wards God who doth imploy them, that wee may not be like the angry dog, which biteth the ſtone which is caſt at him. The man that ſhall loue, will ſay as *Dauid*, when *Shemei* curſed him; *Suffer him to curſe, for the Lord hath bidden him.* The Lord proueth me, or correcteth mee: my ſinnes fortifie mine enemies, and make them neceſſary: the ſtroakes of God are more wholſome than the flatteries of the world. In our domeſticke harmes, let vs take heed of reſembling ſuch

ſuch hurt men, as falling into frenzie, doe teare all things prepared to dreſſe them withall. Yea euen out of affliction, and in full proſperity, what ſweetnes and pleaſure is there in this cõmunication? For according to the commandement of our Sauiour, *Mat. 6.* the faithfull *ſhall enter into his cloſet, and hauing ſhut his doore, ſhall pray vnto his father, who ſeeth him in ſecret, and who will reward him openly.* There being couered from the eyes of men, hee ſhall diſcouer himſelfe before God,

with leſſe diſtraction, and more familiarity. There, after hauing ſpoken to himſelfe, he will frame his owne inditement, and condemne himſelfe that God may pardon him. And taking the law as a looking-glaſſe, hee will acknowledge therein the ſpots of his ſoule, will ſeeke to couer them by faith, and to correct them by repentance. There hee will meditate vpon the workes of God throughout the World, his Iudgements againſt his enemies, his benefits towards

wards his Church ; and particularly vnto himselfe, how God hath guided him, instructed him, and brought him vnto his knowledge. How many Monarkes and people haue set themselues against the Church beeing weake and comtemptible in appearance, and haue crushed themselues there-against : but the Church of God subsisteth, and so shall doe vnto the end. Yea euen vsing a ladder as it were in his meditation, hee shall raise himself to the contemplation of the

workes of our redemption, marking therein how God would haue the remedies proportionable to the euill. For becauſe man deſiring to make himſelfe like vnto God, by exalting himſelfe, is fallen into death : God hauing made himſelfe like vnto man, by abaſing himſelfe, hath reſtored him vnto life. And as the woman brought vnto man the fruit of death : ſo God would that Woman, to wit, the holy Virgin, ſhould bring man the fruit of life. And as out of the

pro-

profound ſleepe of the firſt *Adam*, God drew him forth a woman, who was bone of his bone, and fleſh of his fleſh: ſo by the death of the ſecond *Adam* (which the Scripture calls a ſleepe) God hath gotten him a Spouſe, that is to ſay, his Church, which is one bodie with him. In this ſame meditation hee will admire, how in one perſon, God hath vnited himſelfe vnto man, hauing ioyned the author of life with a mortall body, ſhutting vp all his celeſtiall treaſures in a

veſſell of earth, to the end wee might there draw of his fulneſſe. How by the infirmity of this fleſh, vanquiſhed the force of Satan; from his extreme ſhame hath drawne exceeding glory; from the death of that man, drawne the life of all men by that very ſame vertue, through which in the beginning of the world he had drawne light out of darkneſſe.

In this contemplation, as being enflamed with this diuine loue, he will raiſe vp himſelfe through faith, euen vnto

to the ioyes of heauen; where God discouers himselfe face to face; where the Harps of Saints sound forth; & where the Seraphins assisting before the throne cry, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hoasts. O how sweet a thing it is to ioyne vnto these their praises, and haue a part in this celestiall harmony! One only beame of this glory in the trãsfiguration of Iesus Christ on the mountaine, had taken away from Saint *Peter* the remembrance of his home and of his wife and family,

mily: It were good (ſaid he) that we ſtaied here; and would haue ſet vp tents there. How much more would hee haue bin rauiſhed, if himſelfe had beene transfigured: as the Apoſtle ſaith, that *Ieſus Chriſt ſhall transforme our vile bodies, that they may bee made like vnto his glorious bodie?* Who doubteth, but that when this glory vaniſhed, S. *Peter* was ſeized with great ſorrow? And ſo indeed the heart of the faithfull comming from this meditation againe, to conſider theſe baſe and earth-

Phil. 3. 21.

earthly things, is neceſſarily touched with a great diſtaſte and baſe eſteeme of them, and is grieued to ſee himſelfe tied thereunto, and to ſay with *Dauid*, *Pſal.* 42. *O when ſhall I preſent my ſelfe before the face of God?* It was theſe thoughts which made the Prophet greedy and thirſty after the Lord. Theſe were the thoughts which made *Paul deſire to bee diſlodged, and to be with Chriſt*; which made him thinke that which was gaine vnto others, to bee loſſe vnto him. Theſe are

are the thoughts which haue euen in our time ſuſtained the martyrs, which haue made them goe vnto death as cheerfully as thoſe which come thence. For *loue is ſtrong* (ſaith *Salomon*) *as death*, yea ſtronger, ſeeing it maketh one to deſpiſe life.

This order of loue is entertained in our ſoules by a frequent communication with GOD: and wee may eaſily ſee, that the cauſe of our ſlackneſſe and coldneſſe in this loue, is, becauſe wee ſpeake not often with God.

God. The moſt exquiſite friendſhips doe waxe cold for want of communication: how much more if friendſhip neuer hath bin, as indeed man is naturally borne and inclined vnto enmity with God? This is a common euill, to wit, that wee are much exerciſed in ſpeaking with others, but very little with our ſelues, and yet leſſe with God. If ſome houres of leiſure doe ſteale vs from men, they giue vs not any whit the more vnto God. If wee enter alone into

into our closet, wee enter not euer the sooner into our selues, to examine our consciences, to search our wounds, to feele the pulses of our consciences, or to talke with God. And yet none shall see him aboue, who hath not carefully sought him heere below, and hath not carefully walked with him by praiers, meditations, and by the studie and reading of the Word. This let vs study, & from our life, which is diuided into a thousand parts, among a thousand occupations, suits,

ſuits, ſollicitations, publicke and domeſtick affaires, let vs withdraw ſome hours to giue our ſelues vnto God, retiring our ſelues out of the throng and noiſe of this world, quietly to meditate on thoſe things which pertaine to our ſaluation. As if by a little channell wee would diuert a part of the troubled waters of a ſtreame, that they may runne more gently and cleerely. A running Brooke preſenteth not any images; nor a ſpirit which is euer in action, and always puzled with buſineſſe,

buſineſſe, hardly can he frame himſelfe vnto the Image of God. Wee muſt then ſeparate ſome houres to ſpeake with God. All the time of our life is loſt, except that which is thus huſbanded. That time alone is only ours, which we giue to God.

Let none here alleage his domeſticke affaires. For if we be Gods children, his ſeruice is part of our domeſticall affaires: yea, and whileſt we are doing our handy workes, what hinders vs that we may not thinke of God, and ſend him vp

vp by our broken ſighes thoſe ſorts of prayers which the ancient Fathers called *eiaculatory*, ſhort praiers which may be ſaid euery where, praiers lanced forth, ſpirituall ſallies born of the preſent occaſion; prayers which haue no other ornament but feruency, whoſe clauſes haue no other contexture but neceſſity. Who doubteth, but that the Prophet *Eliſeus* ploughing of his field, of that very labour of his tooke occaſion to ſay, We ſow heere in teares, but wee ſhall reape in heauen with

with ioy ? Or that the Apoſtle S. *Paul*, labouring with his hands to make tents, of this earthly trauel, tooke occaſion to thinke of our heauenly reſt ? The way is euery where open vnto praier, and the loue of God is ingenious to ſuggeſt thoughts, which like ſparkes of piety mount vp vnto God.

The

The fifth marke of the Loue of God.

THe life of the body is discernd by these two markes: 1. by motion: 2. by feeling. The loue of God being the life of our soules, is also knowne by these two things. The foure marks of this loue which wee haue hitherto presẽted, are the motions of our soules; for they are holy actions, and spirituall motions, produced by the loue of God: but this fift mark is the feeling, to wit, *an affection which*

Zeale of the glory of God.

which maketh a man ſenſible, to be moued either with griefe or with ioy, according as God is blaſphemed or glorified. Carnall and vicious loue may ſerue vs for an example. We reade of the ſonne of King *Antigonus*, that being grieuouſly ſicke, and none knowing the cauſe of his malady; his Phyſitian perceiued the cauſe to bee the loue of his mother in law, becauſe that ſhe being entred into the chamber, his pulſe began to beate extraordinarily: the like happeneth in the loue of God. All men that

are

are therewith possessed, when that they see God glorified, or his name & his truth blasphemed, although hee intend to containe himselfe, yet will the pulse of his conscience be extraordinarily moued, either with ioy, or sorrow & impatience. It will chance him as it happened vnto *Cræsus* his son, who hauing been euer dumbe, came suddenly to his speech, seeing his father assailed, fear & grief hauing ouercome all naturall hinderances. For the Spirit of Iesus Christ dwelling in him produceth the same ef-

effects in him as in himselfe; of whom it is written, *The Zeale of thy house hath eaten me vp.* This affection did exulcerate the Apostle S. *Paul* beeing at Athens, and grieued his soule to see the Towne so giuen to idolatry. This same zeale was it which seized on the soule of *Eli* his daughter in law; so as in her death she was not so much afflicted either for his or for her husbands, as for the Arke of the couenant which was taken by the Infidels. It is of this alone that she speaketh dying,

Rom. 15. 3.

Act. 17. 16.

The

The glory of the Lord (saith shee) *is departed from Israel.* There is no more certaine effect of the loue of God, than this here: for if at one time we receiue seuerall newes; the one of the losse of a law suit; the other of the reuolt of some persõs bought; and are more grieued with the last than the first. Or if we be more angry to heare Gods name blasphemed, than to heare our selues euill spoken of; then haue we in vs an assured witnesse, that the loue of God is liuely imprin-

1 Sa. 4. 21.

ted in our ſoules. Good blood will not bely it ſelfe. All wel-borne children are touched at the quick with the iniuries are done vnto their fathers: whoſo is not moued therewith, confeſſeth himſelfe a baſtard or a ſtranger. This is an euill which wee ſee before our eyes, to our greate griefe: that vnto them which make profeſſion to carry weapons, and to vnderſtand the terms of reputatiõ; if one ſpeake the leaſt croſſe word, it is enough to cut one anothers throate: ſo that they con-

confeſſe their liues to be little worth, ſeeing they will hazard them for ſo little, making it an euery dayes exerciſe: but if God be blaſphemed, and his truth ſlandered, if his name be abuſed before their eies, they remaine vnmoueable, and beare a part therein. Wee are Lepers, without feeling in ſpirituall things, but very ſenſible in carnal. We goe for curioſity vnto ſermons, where Gods truth is oppoſed againſt & our preſence by the weake taken for an approbatiõ: but we would

be loth to bee found in a place or company where the honour of our house should bee defamed, but to contradict the same: let vs vndergo in this point a voluntary condemnation, and let vs acknowledge that this spirituall feeling is very feeble in vs, to the end wee may craue of God to awaken it by quickning vs with his loue.

From these fiue degrees and fiue markes, you may easily gather, that the loue of God consisteth not onely in hauing a good opinion of

of him, or to haue a good feeling, or to ſpeak well of him; but that chiefly it conſiſteth in obeying him, and conforming vs to his will: ſo God in his Law ſaith, that he ſheweth mercy vnto them which loue him; but he addeth, *and which keepe my commandements*: & Ieſus Chriſt, *Iohn* 14. *Whoſo loueth me, will keepe my ſayings*. And the ſame Apoſtle in another place: *My little children loue not in word, neither in tongue onely, but in deed and in truth*. So Saint *Iames* ſaith: *That pure and* 1 *Iohn* 3.

Ch. 1. *v.* 17.

vndefiled Religion before God, is to visit the fatherlesse and widowes in their aduersity, and to keepe our selues vnspotted of the World. But there be many that are religious in speech, not in actions; and who study to bee more skilfull, not more wise; who confesse God with their lippes, but deny him in their hearts. Like vnto those which struck Iesus Christ, saying, *Haile, Master:* or to *Rabshakeh*, who spake not the language of the people of God, but for to dishonour him withall.

He

He knoweth not God, who loueth him not: & he loueth him not, who obeyeth not his wil. The children of *Eli* were instructed in the will of God; for being Priests, they taught it vnto others; and yet the Scripture saith, 1 *Sam.* 2. 12. that *they knew not God, because they loued him not.* *The Kingdome of God* (saith Saint *Paul*) *lyeth not in words, but in power.* It is euen so with his loue. So *Dauid* in the 33. *Psalme* saith, that *prayses are very comely*; but hee addeth, *in the mouthes of iust men.* 1 Cor. 4 20.

As for the wicked, God ſaith vnto him in the 50. *Pſalme, Wherefore takeſt thou my words into thy mouth?* For this cauſe was it that Ieſus Chriſt when the deuill confeſſed him, ſaid vnto him, *Hold thy peace, hold thy peace.* For the praiſe of God, and the truth of religion, are vilified and debaſed in the mouth of the wicked, and thereby loſe their authoritie: for ſhee is made a companion of vice; and the liuery of Gods children becommeth by this meanes a cloake of impiety. Thou ſaiſt, I loue

loue God, but doeſt deſpiſe his will: I loue God, but doeſt hate the image of God. Canſt thou loue God, without following him? or follow ſuch as doe good to their enemies, whileſt thou liueſt in diſcord with thy brethren? We proteſt al of vs to loue God, but wee better loue the increaſe of our moneies than the aduancement of his cauſe. Wee proteſt to feare him, but we doe not feare to doe before him ſuch things as we would ſhame to doe before men. Who is that quarreller or theeſe, that

will ſtrike or ſteale in the preſence of the Iudge? And for all this, what doe wee not in Gods ſight, the Iudge not onely of our actions but alſo of our thoghts? We proteſt to loue Ieſus Chriſt, and yet abandon his members which are the poore. We ſpend more in a quarter of an houre at play, then in a whole yeere in almes. The ſuperfluity of our attire, would cloath a great number of poore. All is ſpent in pleaſure, and nothing in piety: All is for our couetouſneſſe, and nothing for Gods

Gods ſake. Doth that man loue God, which will not willingly ſpeake vnto him, nor of him; or who taketh no counſell of God in his diſtreſſe? or who is not touched with the zeale of his glory? In the mean time there is none among vs, who maketh not profeſſion to loue God: which ſheweth that wee loue him in retail; this being in generall, and gainſaid in particular. We ſpeake of heauen, but haue our hearts on the earth. By this meanes if one mark apart our loue to God, it

it may bee found ſome ſpeciall matter; but if wee ballance it with our loue of the world, our pleaſures, our riches, our preferments, it is found very light: ſo that our loue is a kinde of diſeſteeme, and almoſt an hatred. Let vs take heed to our ſelues, for we ſhal not bee iudged according to this generall profeſſiõ, but according to our particular actions. And if ſo it be, that we loue not God as wee ought, or if wee loue ſome other thing with him otherwiſe than for his ſake, how ſhall we

ſubſiſt

ſubſiſt before him, loving any thing better than he? yea euen againſt him; louing that which God hateth, to wit, the world and the deſires thereof, and cheriſhing his enemies in his preſence.

CHAP.

Chap. IV.

Fiue meanes or helps to inflame vs in the loue of God.

NOw we are to treat of the meanes to nouriſh in vs this loue. It is ſurely an effect of the ſpirit of ſanctification, which God giueth onely to his children: whereupon this Spirit is called the Spirit of adoption by the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8. becauſe it is not giuen to any other then the children of GOD, which he hath adopted in

in Iesus Christ: and that therefore hee frameth their hearts vnto a child-like loue, and to haue recourse vnto God as their Father. It is requisite, that the grace of God should preuent our wills, to make them willing; that it may accompany thẽ, that they may will feruently; and that it follow them, to the end they may not will in vaine, and without fruit. *It is God which bringeth forth in vs with efficacie, both the will and the deede, according to his good pleasure.* Notwithstan-

Phil 2. 13.

ſtanding God moueth vs not like ſtones; hee maketh vs follow willingly, hee bendeth our wills by an vnconſtrained neceſſity. For this cauſe is it, that wee are
1.Cor.3.9. called, *workers together with God*: and that in the ſame place where S. *Paul* ſaith, *that God giueth the wil and the deed according to his good pleaſure*, hee willeth notwithſtanding, that *we ſhould work out our own ſaluatiõ with feare and trembling*, *Phil.* 2.12,13.

The meanes then which wee haue to employ our ſelues in the nou-

nourishing and cherish ing of this loue of God in vs, is in generall, to giue our selues to good workes, which bee pleasing vnto him. But in this trauell, I finde fiue helpes, by which wisedome ioyned with pietie, through a holy industry, doe quicken this loue in vs, and doe put matches as it were vnto our hearts, thereby to kindle this spirituall flame.

These meanes or aids are:

I. The image of vices.

II. The choice of friends.

friends.

III. Hatred of the world.

IV. Prayer.

V. The hearing and reading of the Word.

The first helpe or aide of the loue of God.

The image of vices.

THose who void out of their lodgings their ſtable dung, doe fatten their fieldes withall; and by ridding themſelues of this infection, doe otherwiſe make a profit thereof. The faithfull Chriſtian ought to fol-

follow this example: for it is the duty of pietie, to discharge our selues of those vices which are of ill sauour before God: but Christian wisdome findeth means to draw euen from this filth, some commodity. He then which would seeke some modell whereon to forme the loue of his God, ought to obserue amongst all the rest, the most monstrous & the most obstinat vices, and they are so all indeede: yet I thinke that extreme auarice doth some deale beare away the bell. Let it

it then bee expoſed to open view; and let this monſter which corrupteth man, when it is within him, teach man being thruſt forth, and inſtruct him a farre off. For will you loue God as you ought? loue him then, as a man extremely couetous loues his money. Auarice taketh away reſt and troubleth ſleepe; his mony is the firſt thought at his waking: ſo let the loue of God breake our ſleepe, poſſeſſe our thoughts in the night; let it bee the firſt of our thoughts at our awaking,

waking, to meditate on his former graces, to diſpoſe of our future life, to bewaile our ſins at the Cocke-crowing. Couetouſneſſe doth ſhut the heart of the couetous into his coffer, where his treaſure is: ſo alſo let the loue of God fix our hearts in Heauen, to the end that there where our treaſures be, there may our hearts bee alſo. Auarice ſnatcheth out of a niggards hand the bread he ſhould eat, and maketh him bee content with little: ſo muſt the loue of God teach

vs

vs abſtinence, and how to bring vnder our bodies; to liue with little, and to depriue our ſelues when it is requiſite, of temporall commodities for his ſeruice. The auaritious man vndertaketh for gaine, long voyages, ſequeſtring himſelfe from his wife and children: ſo muſt the loue of God prepare vs to endure baniſhment, to leaue wife and children to follow God, remembring the ſaying of our Lord, *Mat.* 10. *Whoſo loueth Father or Mother more then me, is not worthy*

thy of me: or whoso loueth Sonne or daughter more then me, is not worthy of me. The couetous man hauing put his mony vnto vsury, calculateth the time, and with impatience attendeth the terme: so wee that know that God hath in his hands our pledge, and that hee will render vs our almes with vsury, ought with impatience to attend the time of payment; and in the meane time very preciously keepe his Obligation, which is the doctrine of the Gospell. The

Iob. 2. 17.

The couetous man, the older hee waxeth, the more greedy he is to gather: hee liueth poorely, that he may die rich; his purpose to gather, is at the greatest, when the tearme of his life is at the shortest: so must the old man fearing God make more carefull prouision of faith and good workes. Let him liue poore in worldly goods that hee may die rich in heauenly. Old age is the grounds and lees of life; but in the faithfull man it reneweth, as vnto an Eagle: for then he feeleth more liuely and

Psal. 103.

and certainly the motions of the life to come; then hath he the wager almoſt in his hand, being neere the end of his courſe. When the riuers are neere their end, and approach vnto the Sea, the Tide commeth towards them and meeteth them: ſo when the courſe of a faithfull mans life commeth neere his end, then God commeth to meet him; and before death, giueth him ſome taſte and feeling of the life to come. Then it is that wee ought to haue a holy couetouſneſſe

to husband our time, make a ſtocke of faith, ſend our good workes before vs, and to make our ſelues friends which may receiue vs into the euerlaſting habitations. This meditation, which giueth vice a double conſtruction, and maketh it look both waies, enforceth it to be an example and helpe vnto vertue: as Amorrhean captiues, to cleanſe and decke the Tabernacle; as a woman of Hethe, whoſe haire and nailes are cut off, *Deu.* 21. For vertue is ſo feeble in vs, that to raiſe it ſelfe vp, it

it borroweth helpe of vice; it passeth ouer to the Philistians to whet their Tooles. Because we cannot comprehend how much we owe vnto God, but through the consideration of that which wee giue vnto our concupiscence; for all that is stolen from him.

1 *Sam.* 13. 20.

The second helpe vnto the Loue of God.

Choice of friends. Gen.30.37.

THe sheepe of *Iacob* broght forth spotted Lambes, according to the colour of the rods were laid before them: so men produce workes conformable vnto the obiects which they haue before their eyes. And this is a great euill, that good examples haue nothing like so great force to forme vs vnto goodnesse, as bad haue to induce vs vnto euill. For, as a man strucken with the pestilence, will sooner

ſooner infect a doozen ſound men which ſhall approach to him, than theſe whole men can helpe him: in like ſort a vicious man will ſooner infect many honeſt men, than he wil correct himſelfe by their example. For vice is heere in his owne ſoile, it commeth vp without planting, it groweth without paine; much more then being fortified from without, and well laboured: but vertue is a ſtranger, and reſembleth a graine brought from the Eaſt, which after much care & labour, doth yet little

prosper, but degenerate; especially in the contagion of these times, which is as the dregges and sink of all seasons & ages, in which vertue is prodigie; and piety a crime or simplicity. For thus do men cal fooliſhnes in this age; in which that they may render or make vertue to be odious they cloath brutiſhneſſe with his habit. Euen as it is vneasy that the flocks feeding amongst the thorny bushes, should not leaue some of their wooll: so it is hard for an honest man, liuing among so great corruption,

tion, but he muſt leaue ſome of his innocency. We fal away inſenſibly, we goe on in badneſſe, without being aware thereof, like people ſleeping in a boat, and carried downe the ſtreame, which make much way without thinking thereon. Wherefore we are to looke to our ſelues, and in ſo contagious an aire, to prouide our ſelues of preſeruatiues, of which, the beſt is *the loue and feare of God*: and this loue is nouriſhed by hanting thoſe which loue him. We muſt acquaint our ſelues with

ſuch as wee ſhould be like; to the end that the faithfull with ſome few friends louing GOD, withdrawing himſelfe as it were from vices, may looke with horror vpon them as from a far off, vpon this ouerflowing torrent and powerfull reigne of the deuill; comforting himſelfe in the meane time in God, and relying on his loue.

This ſame friendſhip among the faithfull, will ſerue the better to make them know themſelues: For ſeeing we be blinde in our imperfections, we ought to borrow our friends

friends eyes, and lend them ours, to the end we may mutually reprehend and correct one another. The serious reprehensions of a friend, doe more good than praises, were they neuer so true. Whoso shall take away from friendship the liberty of reprehending, leaueth nothing that may distinguish it from flattery.

And seeing that wee are naturally lame and benummed in things touching Gods seruice, wee must employ the helpe of our friends, to the end they may bring

vs into this bath to receiue healing. For God communicateth not his graces vnto vs, that they should fade and vanish with vs, but that wee might multiply our talent; and that the spring of his spirituall benedictions, which he causeth to break forth in vs, may run out & serue for instruction to our neighbours : as Christ saith to *Peter : But thou being conuerted, confirm thy brethren.* For if God command vs to take vp our enemies strayed beast ; how much more to reform the soule of our friend,

friend, whē it wandereth out of the way of ſaluation? This communicatiō alſo among the faithfull, bringeth comfort in affliction, which being diuided among many, is more eaſily borne. Many ſmall brooks reunited in one channell, carrie great veſſels: many afflicted ſpirits ioyning themſelues together by concord & mutuall ſupport, will eaſily beare an afflictiō. And the Word of God witneſſeth vnto vs, that God looketh on, hearkneth vnto, & taketh pleaſure in the conſolations and mutuall exhor-

hortations of his children. So the Prophet *Malachie* in the third chapter saith, that when the proud are esteemed happy, and the bad aduanced, *then those which feared the Lord, spake one vnto another, and the Lord was attentiue and heard: and a booke of remembrance was written before him, for them which feare the Lord, and thinke on his Name; and they shall be mine (said the Lord) when I shall lay apart my most precious iewels.* O how precious a treasure is a vertuous friend fearing

ring God! And would to God, that as wee are vſed to know by certaine markes the goodneſſe and courage of a horſe; ſo alſo in the choiſe of friends, that wee might with the ſight of a man know his vertue: but the lurking holes of the ſpirit of a man are ſo deepe, that he deceiueth both himſelfe and others, and he is hidden euen from himſelfe. Yet by a mans innocency of his actiõs, ſobrietie of his words, by the ſimplicitie of his habit, by his zeale and ardour in Gods cauſe, by

by his diſ-eſteeme of gaine, by his eſchuing of pleaſures; you may very probably know the purity of his minde without, euen as by the ſparkes comming forth of a heape of aſhes, men know the hidden fire.

The third helpe of the loue of God.

Contempt and hatred of the world.

THe diſeſteeme likewiſe and hatred of the world, doth not a little aide vnto the loue of God. For *the loue of the world* (ſaith *S. Iames*) *is enmity againſt God.* And *S. Iohn*

S. Iohn likewiſe : *If any one loue the world, the loue of the Father is not in him.* By *the world*, I vnderſtand humane buſines, worldly pomp, carnal enticements, earthly deſires, deceitfull & vncertaine hopes : whoſo loueth God, will looke on theſe things with diſdaine. He will paſſe ouer all the ages of man, from his conception vnto his rotten ſepulcher : he will conſider in all the conditions and ſtates of his life, his certaine miſery, his vncertaine hopes, vnfruitfull gaine, that he may ſay with *Salomon*, *Va-*

1 *Iohn* 2.

Vanitie of vanities, all is vanitie. Looking on theſe things with a diſdaine, mingled with compaſſion: a diſdaine extending euen vnto hatred, when hee ſhall conſider wickedneſſe to bee mingled with vanitie, and the deuill to haue ſo eſtabliſhed his religion in the world, that it is a kind of miracle and prodigie to ſee therein a good man. So as the Prophet *Eſay* acknowledgeth chap. 8. *Behold me* (ſaid he) *and the children which the Lord hath giuen me, for a ſigne and*

for

for a miracle in Israel. Now if it were a miracle in Israel, to see a familie instructed in the feare of the Lord, how much more among Infidels? and if in Ierusalem, how much more in Babylon? It is then without reason that wee wonder, when wee see examples of disloyaltie, crueltie, vncleanneſſe; seeing that on the contrary the Spirit of God teacheth vs, to hold the example of pietie and the feare of God, for a miraculous and vnusuall thing. These and such like con-

considerations ioyned vnto the feeling of the excellencie of the children of GOD, will cause the faithfull to esteeme himselfe better than the world; and looking on the earth as a place cursed, will liue therein as a passenger and traueller: as an English man that should trauell ouer Persia or Tartaria, intending to returne into his countrey. For hee will not answer as that Philosopher, who being enquired, of what countrey hee was, answered, that he was a cittizen of the

the world: but the faithfull faith, he is a ſtranger in this world, and a Citizen of heauen; and therefore withdrawing his affection from the world, and raiſing vp his heart vnto God, he doth like him, who from the top of the Alpes, where the aire is cleere, looketh vpon the fields beaten with tempeſt, the countrey al about foggy and miſty; & there reioyceth himſelfe, reſting himſelf vpõ the loue of God, which hath deliuered him from this generall maledictiõ So in the 29. *Pſalme*, after

ter hauing represented the tearing of the Cedars, the shaking of the mountains, and the discouering of the forest by the force of the thundring voice of God; he withdraweth the children of God out of this confusion, and assembles them into Gods Palace where hee is glorified; and assures himselfe, that God will giue peace and strength vnto his people. For in this Palace of God, which is his Church, doth sound that voice, not which shaketh the mountaines, but which assureth

assureth our hearts; not that voice which rooteth vp the Cedars, but that which comforteth our consciences: not that which causeth the Hindes to cast their young ones, but which makes vs to conceiue hope. It is the Word of the Gospell, in which God layeth open the treasures of his loue: in which whosoeuer shall take a relish, he shall finde the sweets of the World; but bitternesse and hating the same, will learne to loue God.

Now we say this, not to

to discharge our selues of all earthly things: this careleſneſſe of the World hindereth not the loue of our children, nor the care of our family, nor our endeuour in the administration of our magistracy; but the faithfull will doe theſe things, as a paſſenger fits himſelfe in the beſt mãner he can at ſome Inne: hee who is not to ſtay there aboue a night, will not ſtand to build a wall; and if he ſuffer there any diſcommodity, he wil patiently digeſt it, becauſe tis but a paſſage. For the faithfull

full will follow domeſti-call and ciuill affaires, not as if he meant there to ſet vp his ſtaffe, to tie thereunto his deſ-ſeignes, or therein to place his hope. His thoughts will euer bee in ſome other place ; and during his buſines, will euer thinke of the vanity of his trauell. He will alwaies begin his actions with the ſeruice of God, and inuocation of his name ; and that ſhall euer bee the firſt, which hee will haue laſt : whileſt worldlings after the example of *Martha*, paine them-ſelues

ſelues exceſſiuely in domeſticke affaires; he, after *Maries* example, will chuſe the good part, which ſhall not be taken from him, placing himſelfe at Chriſts feet to heare his Word. If he haue any worldly feares, they will giue place vnto the feare of God. If hee haue any hopes, they will giue place vnto his hope of the Kingdome of heauen. If hee haue any ſorrowes, they will be ſwallowed vp of a greater ſorrow, proceeding from the ſenſe of his ſinnes, or the bruiſings of *Ioſeph*.

God

God himſelfe herein is an example vnto vs. For in building of the world, hee hath done contrary to men which doe build alſo: men begin at the foundation, but God beginneth at the toppe. Hee ſtretched out the heauens, before hee laid the foundatiõs of the earth. The naturall works of God, are ſpirituall inſtructions vnto vs. To the end that wee may follow this order, and that wee may euer begin by the care of heauenly things, the earthly will preſent themſelues

in the second ranke to be thought on, not of loue or of purpose, but by necessitie, & as much as is required, for not seeming cruell vnto those which be ours, or enemies to our selues. *Seeke yee first the Kingdome of God, and the righteousnesse thereof, and all other things shall be administred vnto you,* Matt. 6. 33.

The

The fourth aid of the Loue of God.

FRequent and often prayers doe likewise norish this loue; I mean as well publike as priuate: for the publike are a quire of sighs, a harmony of affections sent vp with one accord vnto God; which imitates that holy consort of the Angels, & soules of the Saints sounding on their harps in heauē, whereof mention is made in the 5. of the *Apocalypse*. In our priuate prayers, the faithfull man being hid- *Prayer.*

den from mans eyes, discouereth himselfe vnto God, maketh his complaints to him with a childe-like familiaritie, prayeth vnto him, not of custome, but with affection, with words broken off with sighs, which are vsed euen in the middest of businesse, through a gentle distraction & wholesome interruption: which praiers haue no other motiue but loue, nor other subiect but necessitie, or other eloquence but affection. None craueth an almes with the flowers of Rhetorike. Familiar

liar ſimplicitie is very comely in prayer. To make theſe ſolitary praiers, *Iſaac* went out into the fields. So King *Ezechias* turned his face vnto the wall, for feare to be troubled in his praier. So the Apoſtle Saint *Peter* went vp vnto an high roome of the houſe to pray alone. Ieſus Chriſt himſelfe in the 6. of *Luke* withdrew himſelfe into a Mountaine to make his praiers, and continued therein all night. Both theſe ſorts of prayers haue promiſe of God to be heard. As touching the publike,

*Gen.*24 63. *Eſay* 38. 2.

*Act.*10.9.

Matth. 28. verſ. 19.20.

our Sauiour promiſeth vs, that *where two or three be gathered together in his Name, hee will be in the midſt of them: and that all which they ſhall aske with one accord, ſhall be granted them.* As for the priuate, hee alſo ſpeaketh thus in the 6. of S. Matth. *When thou prayeſt, enter into thy cloſet, and hauing ſhut the doore, pray vnto thy Father which is in ſecret; and thy Father which is in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly.*

Theſe prayers are ſo many matches of the loue of God. For as ſoone

loone as God will bee prayed vnto by vs, this is a great witneſſe vnto vs that he loues vs. Our importunitie is pleaſing vnto him; hee giueth by his commandement free acceſſe vnto our prayers; That wee may obtaine his graces, hee demandeth no other price of vs but our praiers. For riuers of his goodneſſe, he demandeth but ſome drops of our thankfulneſſe. He is attentiue vnto the crie of the afflicted. *Hee is nigh vnto them which call vpon him.* If the cry of dead *Abels* bloud came

Pſ. 45. 18.

vp vnto him; how much more the cry of his liuing children, which call vpon him in the name of Ieſus Chriſt? If he reckon our haires, how much more our ſighs and our prayers, which he himſelfe hath preſcribed vs? Adde hereunto, that prayer is a ſtrong bridle vnto vs, to hold vs in the feare of God. For this onely thought, that it is before him that we preſent our ſelues, before him, who knoweth our harts, who ſeeth all our filthineſſe through the cloake of hypocriſie; obligeth vs

to

to purifie our hearts and our hands, to wit, our thoughts and actions; according to the commandement of the Apostle: *I will* (saith he) *that all men make prayers in all places, heauing vp pure hands without anger or debate.* 1 *Tim.* 2. On the contrary, God (by the Prophet *Esay*) *reiecteth hands full of bloud, euen when they lengthen out their prayers.* *Esay* 1.

Then when we come to frame our prayers, each word that wee say, is a lesson or a reproach. For example, wee thus begin the Lords prayer;

Our Father which art in heauen. In calling him *our Father*, wee learne on the one part to bee his obedient children, & to be perſwaded of his loue: on the other ſide, to deſpiſe the world, as inferior to our dignitie, ſeeing wee be the children of God. This word alſo of *Our*, frameth vs vnto charitie towards our neighbours, and to procure their good, not only in our praiers, but in all our actions. And theſe words, *which art in heauen*, aduertiſe vs to ſeeke for heauenly things; and that our con-

conuerſation ſhould be as that of heauenly citizens and children of the heauenly King. Then when the faithfull ſhall come to propoſe his demands, he will chide himſelfe on this ſort: I craue of God that *His name may be hallowed*, and yet I profane and diſhonour it. I deſire that *his kingdome may come*, and be aduanced; and notwithſtanding I reſiſt and foreſlow it as much as lieth in me, vnwilling that hee ſhould reigne in me; not ſubiecting my ſelfe vnto the Scepter of his Kingdome,

dome, which is his Word; not contributing any thing to his Church, which is called in the Gospell, Gods kingdome. Item, I pray *his will may be done*, and yet I resist this will. I beg my *bread*, and yet couet another mans: *My daily bread*, and yet my couetous care extends it selfe vnto many yeeres. So likewise wee craue that God *would forgiue vs as wee forgiue them which haue trespassed against vs*; and for all that wee are vnreconcileable, our hatred is mortall, or to say better,

better, immortall; and yet feare not that God ſhould heare vs, pardoning vs according as we pardon our neighbours. So we deſire *not to be led into temptation*, and yet wee runne after temptations, bad companies, bookes of loue-tales, after enticements and occaſions of doing ill. Finally, we finiſh this praier with mention of the kingdome and glory of GOD, by which this ſame prayer began, that it might warne vs, that euen as our prayers, ſo alſo all our affections ought to begin and end with

with the glory of God. So many petitions, so many aduertiſements for Ieſus Chriſt moſt artificially, by teaching vs how to craue for good, teacheth vs alſo to doe it. In ordering our prayers, hee alſo ordereth our actions: ſo as ſpeaking to God, wee alſo ſpeake to our ſelues; by praying vnto God, wee learne alſo to feare him. And ſurely when you ſhall ſee vnrulineſſe in an houſehold, either by diſobedience of the children, or by diſſention between man and wife, it is a certaine

taine witneſſe that God is not there called vpon as hee ought. For this onely action of lifting vp of hearts and hands together vnto God, might haue ſufficed to reunite their diuided affections, and entertaine from day to day, their family in the feare of God. For by ſpeaking often to God, we learne to loue him, and louing him to follow him. *Moſes*, his face became ſhining for hauing ſpoken with God: ſo our ſoules will become enlightned in the knowledge of God, when wee ſhall

ſhal haue often accuſtomed them to ſpeake with God.

Theſe very ſame praiers do nouriſh faith, and by conſequence the loue of God. For if we truſt in any one, we muſt neceſſarily loue him. Prayer without faith, is a kind of iniury done to God; becauſe we doubt either of his power, or of the truth of his promiſes. *How will they call vpon him, in whom they haue not beleeued? Rom.* 10. And therefore Saint *Iames* chap 5. calleth it *the praier of faith*: and ſaith, that without faith wee

we can obtaine nothing of God.

Yea truly, faith engendreth praier, but this daughter nouriſheth her mother; and in nouriſhing faith, it nouriſhes alſo by conſequent the loue of God, cleauing vnto his promiſes, and ſtrengthening it ſelfe by the proofes of Gods aſſiſtance, as oftentimes as he hath heard our prayers.

The

The fifth aid of the Loue of God.

Hearing & reading of the Word of God.

NOw remaineth the hearing, and reading of the Word of God: the Word which is the finger of God, with which hee engraueth in vs his loue. A Word which breatheth nothing but loue: the hearing whereof maketh the Spouſe to ſpring with ioy, in the ſecond of Canticles. *This is* (ſaid ſhee) *the voice of my Welbeloued.* And in the fifth chapter, *My ſoule was in a maze*

to

to heare him ſpeake. Faith commeth by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Now this faith is this very ſame loue, truſting in the promiſes of God. The loue of God then commeth alſo by hearing of his Word: God ordaining, that as death entered into the world by the eare and hearing of the deuils ſpeech; ſo life ſhould enter by the eare and hearing of Gods Word. It is the principall meanes through which hee impr[illegible]teth in vs his loue. Rom. 13.

For in this Word, God

God doth plainly declare his loue. It was already a great loue to haue created all things for man, and to haue eſtabliſhed him ouer the works of his hands. *Dauid* in the 8. Pſalme, rauiſhed with this contemplation, crieth out, alas, *What is man that thou remembreſt him, or the ſonne of man, that thou ſhouldeſt be mindfull of him?* Now hee ſaith this, hauing reſpect vnto the meanneſſe of man; how much more would hee haue exclaimed, if hee had conſidered his peruerſneſſe?

neſſe ? Hee admireth Gods liberalitie towards man in the creation ; how much more muſt wee admire his loue in our redemption ; wherein hee not onely giueth vs his good things, but his onely Sonne, and in his Sonne himſelfe ? Hee admireth the contemplation of heauen ; how much more the poſſeſſion? He glorifieth God for the domination which hee giueth vs ouer the creatures ; how much then muſt wee glorifie him for our eternall reigne with his Angels ? To this

this purpoſe it is good to obſerue, how the deuill, who is Gods Ape, hath declared vnto the heathen many fables, in which they make *Iupiter* their god deſcend on earth, being drawne thither by loue. Theſe fables verily are profane, which plant vices in heauen, to the end they may be authorized. Notwithſtanding I thinke that euill Spirits haue formed theſe impieties, in imitation of the doctrine of the Goſpell: the ſumme whereof is, that God being moued with the loue

loue which he beareth vnto mankinde, came downe from heauen, and by a ſpirituall mariage allied himſelfe vnto man, cloathing himſelfe with our fleſh, to ioyne our ſelues vnto God. For the Goſpell is no other thing than a meanes to draw man vnto God, by the force of this loue of God towards man, which ought to kindle in man loue towards God. For this cauſe God deſiring to repreſent in a word, both the loue which he beareth to vs, and that which hee looketh for at

at our hands, compareth this ſacred bond which he will haue with vs, vnto a mariage, profeſſing himſelfe to bee iealous of our loue. This marriage is betweene Ieſus Chriſt and his Church; a marriage, the bond whereof is the Spirit of God, whoſe troth-plight is performed in the Church, but the nuptiall feaſt ſhall bee in the Kingdome of heauen: whoſe contract is the Goſpell, a contract, whereof the Apoſtles haue been the Notaries, ſubſigned with the bloud of the Sonne of

of God, ratified by the bloud of ſo many Martyrs, yea euen of our time.

Adde hereunto the euident witneſſes of the loue of God, in the conduct and conſeruation of his Church, according to the recitall thereof made in the Word of God. How hee hath reuenged the bloud of *Abel*. How he ſerued as a Pilot and Steeres-man to his Church incloſed within the Arke. How for the loue of *Abraham* & *Iſaac*, hee hath ſtricken or curbed Kings. How

he prepared lodging for his people in Egypt. How hee drew them from thence with a mighty and outstretched arme, hauing carried his children out of captiuitie, as vpon Eagles wings. How hee hath giuen them his law, fed them with bread of heauen, couered them in the day time, and giuen them light in the night; driuen out nations before them. How his chastisements haue euer beene interlaced with deliuerances, to the end they should not fall asleepe in a long pro-

prosperitie, nor be ouerwhelmed with too long aduersitie. The history of Iudges, of *Dauid* and his successors, the deliuerance of Babylon, the reestablishment of Ierusalem, is it not a whole webbe of wonders, proceeding from the loue of God towards his Church?

And in the Gospell, doe wee not see all the Romane Empire moued, and the power of the greatest Emperor of the World employed, in the numbring of all the families, onely to make a poore Virgin

passe from Nazareth to Bethlehem ? curbing with his decree and counsell, all the ambition of so great a Monarch, and making him contribute at vnawares vnto the accomplishment of the prophecies? That which is the greatest of the world, employeth it selfe for the least of his children, and serueth for the execution of his loue.

The holy Scripture being full of such examples, rightly may it be called *The Booke of true loue*; seeing that therein God not onely vnfoldeth

deth his loue, but alſo bindeth vs to loue him; and not only exhorteth vs to this loue, but alſo produceth it in vs by this ſame Word, accompanying the preaching of the ſame with the efficacie of his holy Spirit.

And to ſay true, I thinke that the moſt part of vs haue had experience, that after the hearing of the Word, the ſparkes of loue doe kindle in our hearts; and that hearing God ſpeake, or ſpeaking of God, wee are inflamed with his loue. So the

two Disciples being in Emmaus, after Iesus Christ was vanished, said, *Did not our hearts burne within vs, when he spake vnto vs on the way, and preached the scriptures?* And *Ieremy*, desiring to reserue the Word of God in his heart, without vttering it, saith, that he felt it in his heart like a burning fire. Wherefore so? but because this Word receiued into the hearts of the auditors, heateth them with the like ardor: as also the tongues of fire descending vpon the Apostles, witnessed that

Ierem.20.

that God gaue them burning tongues, and a Word full of efficacie, to inflame mens hearts. Wherefore those which being carried away with their businesse, or withheld by feare, or perswaded of their sufficiencie, neglect comming to sermons, shall insensibly feele that this heat waxeth coole, and that a cawle groweth ouer their consciences: This negligence will grow to a distaste, this distast to a disdaine, this disesteeme vnto a hardnesse of heart and enmitie against God. Whosoeuer will

entertaine the loue of God in his heart, ought daily to come and heare his Word, the which hee hath choſen as a wholeſome meanes to moue our hearts, and to purge our ſpirits: as Chriſt ſaith to his Apoſtles: *You are cleane through the Word which I haue ſpoken vnto you.* Being there, wee muſt hearken to the preaching with greedineſſe, ſuffer reprehenſions gently, receiue exhortations with ardor. And euen as thoſe, vpon whō men meane to make ſome inciſion, ſuffer them-

themſelues to be bound and pinioned by the Chirurgion, leſt the motion of the patient ſhold hinder the operation: ſo muſt wee, when the ſeruants of God are occupied about pricking the apoſtumes of our vices, and cutting off our concupiſcences (which *S. Paul* calleth *our members*) ſtay our mouing, lightneſſe, and inconſtancie, leſt it hinder the efficacy of this word by our impatiencie.

To the hearing of the Word, wee muſt adde the reading, according to the example of thoſe

of Beroea ; who after they had heard *S. Pauls* preaching, went & consulted with the Scriptures, to see the conformitie thereof with the writings of the Prophets; although that the Apostle being powerful in miracles & in words, did preach with authoritie enough to be beleeued, as might bee thought : how much more ought wee now adayes, at our comming from the sermon, content our curiositie, to know if that wee heare that day, be true ? Wee which heare Pastors which

which are not receiuable; but so farre forth as they proue their sayings by the Word of God. Amongst all the bookes of holy Scripture, the most obscure is the Apocalypse: and yet it is said in the first chapter, that *happy are they that reade, and those which heare the words of this Prophecie.* In *Deut.* 17. God commandeth Kings to read the booke of the Law, all the dayes of their life. Reading thereof was the exercise of the Queene *Candaces* Eunuch, as hee rode in his chariot. If he read being

being a Pagan, how much more, being become a Christian? and if he read when he vnderstood not, how much more when he began to vnderstand? if he read in his Chariot, how much more in his house? Also God hath tendered him his hand by the ministery of *Philip*; and vpon the reading, the light of the Gospell is come vnto him, for an argument vnto vs of hope, that in reading carefully the holy Scriptures, God wil enlighten vs. He which accuseth it of obscuritie, accuseth it also

alſo of leaſing: for it ſaith of it ſelfe, that it enlightneth the eyes; that it giueth wiſedome to the poore and ſimple; that it is a lanterne to our feet, and a light vnto our paths. If it be obſcure, *it is* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *to thoſe, of whom the God of this world hath blinded the vnderſtandings.* At leaſt let vs haue good opinion of God our Father. Let vs not thinke that he hath written his Teſtament in obſcure termes and ambiguous clauſes, to intangle vs in ſuits. The Father of lights is neuer cauſe of

of obſcuritie. Let vs not endeuour to make this word ſuſpicious vnto the people, as if the reading thereof were dangerous; as doe thoſe profanely fearefull people, who vnder euery ſtone imagine a Scorpion to lurke. If there be any difficulties, the reſt which is cleare, is ſufficient vnto ſaluation. If it appertaine but vnto the learned to reade the Scriptures, it appertaineth then vnto none to reade them: for no body is skilfull, before he haue read them. Wee reade not the Word of God, becauſe

becauſe we are learned, but to become ſo.

Now heere wee paſſe ouer an infinite number of profits which wee gather of this reading; as is the confirmation of our faith, conſolation in affliction, a gentle diuerting, a Maſter which flattereth not, a company which is not troubleſome, a ſpirituall munition-houſe, which containeth all ſorts of weapons againſt temptations, which furniſheth wherewithall to reſiſt againſt error, following the example of our Lord, euer reſiſting the deuill

deuill by Scripture, and saying vnto him, *It is written, it is written, &c.* Onely wee will stay our selues vpon this, to wit, that the reading kindleth in our hearts the loue of God.

This is knowne by experience. For after a man once begins to take a taste in reading the holy Scriptures, other studies beginne to proue without relish: you shall see no more vpon the Carpet vaine bookes of loue; the ridiculous Romans and tales of *Amadis* doe flie before the Bible, more than

than the Deuill before holy Water; all these pleasing and vaine readings which busied the spirit, and tickled the imagination, doe leese their taste after this spirituall nourishment. Another kinde of loue is kindled in the spirits of those which daily propose vnto themselues the witnesses of the loue of God toward vs, contained in his Word.

This meditation furnisheth vs with a iust subiect of complaint. For then when they burned vs for reading the Scrip-

Scriptures, wee burned with zeale to be reading them. Now with our libertie is bred alſo our negligence & diſ-eſteeme thereof. Wee are barbarous, and new to ſeeke in the Language of Gods Spirit. Our hearts then reſemble flint-ſtones, which caſt no ſparks but when they are ſtrucken. Many will haue a Bible well bound and gilt, lying vpon a cupboord, more for ſhew than for inſtruction: we loue but the outſide thereof. We adorne the holy Scriptures outwardly: but it were better it might decke

decke vs within. It were better it were torn with often reading, that thy conſcience might bee more entire : for it is more eaſie for thee to haue another, than it is eaſie for thee to bee an honeſt man without it. Wee deſire a faire impreſſion ; but the faireſt impreſſion is that which is made with the finger of God in our ſoules.

The matrices of theſe characters are in Heauen. This loue of God is ingrauen in our hearts with his hand, and is formed vpon the modell of that loue which he hath borne

borne vs in his Sonne: according as he ſaith in the 15. of *S. Iohn*: *As my Father loued mee, ſo haue I loued you: remaine in my loue.*

FINIS.